



Sharing the Health

NOKOMIS HEALTHY SENIORS

4120 17th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55407

www.NokomisHealthySeniors.org

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Depression: It's Not a Normal Part of Aging

By Kay King, NAMI Minnesota

We somehow believe that the symptoms of depression in older adults are normal. You experience the loss of your friends or perhaps your spouse or partner. You may move out of your long-time family home, filled with many memories. You might lose your hearing or your sight. You may have chronic pain. You lose your independence and are frustrated with your inability to do the things you used to do. Who wouldn't be sad?

We are all sad at one time or another. **But sadness—when it is intense or is felt for a long period of time—may be depression. When it interferes with one's ability to get along with others or carry out the activities of every day life, then it may be depression.**

Depression and anxiety are not a normal part of aging and yet they are often not recognized or diagnosed. The symptoms are often mistaken

for dementia or problems with reasoning or judgment. Symptoms might include a disruption in sleeping or eating habits, deep sadness, withdrawal from activities that were once enjoyable, cutting oneself off from friends or family, or unexplained stomach pains.

Depression is very common. The National Institute of Mental Health reports that one in four adults has a mental illness, the most common ones being depression and anxiety. It affects everyone—every age, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, or income. Depression often accompanies other illnesses, such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, strokes, Parkinson's, thyroid disorder, and arthritis. Some medications may produce depression as a side effect.

It's important to understand that these are biological illnesses that affect our brain. We understand that Alzheimer's is an illness that affects the brain, and depression is no different. Depression is not the result of personal weakness, lack of character, or poor upbringing. It's a real illness. An illness that can be treated.

If you or someone you know is experiencing the

"Depression is at an epidemic rate in this country. Pain and sadness don't keep you from functioning. Depression does."

—Dr. Janet Taylor

DID YOU KNOW?

Major depression affects nearly two to three million individuals in North America age 65+. When milder levels of depression are included, as many as 6 million older adults in the U.S. might be affected.

It's not uncommon for there to be a co-occurring disorder with depression, such as abuse of alcohol, drugs, and prescription medications. Both need to be treated; preferably concurrently.

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Meet Julie Toth

Interview by Tricia Theurer

Question: How are you involved with Nokomis Healthy Seniors?

Answer: I became aware of NHS in 2004 through the University of Minnesota, and my relationship with NHS has changed over the years. I worked for NHS as their nurse from 2005 to 2007 while also working with other Living at Home (LAH)/Block Nurse Programs (BNPs), and I thoroughly enjoyed the work. I loved connecting with people on a practical level about their health. For example, I remember speaking with a man who was recently prescribed a new medicine to be taken using an inhaler, but he'd never used an inhaler before. The medicine only works if it's used properly . . . if you've ever used an inhaler you know there's sort of a skill to it. We took as much time as needed to practice until he felt comfortable. This was the kind of work I found personally rewarding.

In 2007 an opportunity came up to work in cardiology research at the Minneapolis VA. I had worked in research for many years before coming to know NHS and wanted to get back to that field of work. I still wanted to stay connected to the important work of NHS, however, so I continued as an NHS volunteer.

I've done more than a few Clean-A-Thons and other events and will talk to anyone who will listen about what a vital organization NHS is (just ask my family and friends!). For several years I served on the Board of Directors for NHS, and I found this deeply gratifying as a way to support the growth of the organization. In the past decade I've seen NHS grow sub-

stantially to better serve the person's whole health. There are now exercise classes, social groups, diverse health and education offerings, social outings . . . there are more activities to connect people all the time.

Can you tell I'm a little enthusiastic about what NHS has become? I can only see it getting better. The staff is always listening for feedback from the seniors and volunteers, and they're full of new ideas. I think it's this enthusiasm, and a love of what they do, that contribute to the growth of NHS. I've said many times: I volunteer for NHS because it helps people stay safely in the home, and community, they love. It's a great idea, and I want something like NHS to be there for me when I need it!



Q: Can you share a bit about your job and where you work?

A: I work at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. Although I'm not in the same position I took when leaving NHS in 2007, I'm still doing work related to research studies. I talk to researchers every day who are coming up with ideas to improve the lives of veterans and non-veterans alike. I find this intellectually stimulating and I'm gratified to be part of the work.

Q: What does your ideal "free" day look like?

A: Quiet. I spend a lot of time talking/interacting with people for my work, so I love spending free time in an unstructured way.

Q: Cats or Dogs?

A: Pan-animal. It's all about the animal's personality, not the type.

A Moment with Megan

By Megan Elliasen, Executive Director

Did you know that May is Mental Health Awareness Month? To bring awareness to this important topic, we're hosting a presentation, "Gray Matters: Depression in Older Adults," on April 5. Kay King, program director for older adults from the Minnesota Chapter of National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), will be presenting. This will be a great talk for all, whether you suffer from depression or may know someone who does.

NAMI Minnesota champions justice, dignity, and respect for all people affected by mental illnesses. At Nokomis Healthy Seniors we hope to spread light on mental illness and remove the stigma around the discussion of it. This stigma can stop people from seeking the help they need. Please join us as we delve into this widespread issue.



"[Mental illness] comes with a package: shame. When any other part of your body gets sick, you get sympathy." —Ruby Wax

To complement the talk, our newsletter this month features an article on depression, along with valuable resources.

On a related note, studies show that clutter and mess can cause anxiety. "Clutter can play a significant role in how we feel about our homes, our workplaces, and ourselves. Messy homes and workspaces leave us feeling anxious, helpless, and overwhelmed," wrote psychologist Sherrie Bourg Carter in an article for *Psychology Today*.

Please join us for an informational session on decluttering by Certified Professional Organizer, Christine Daves, owner of Think Organized, on March 14 at 1:30 at Nokomis Square. You don't have to live at Nokomis Square to attend our presentations there; all are welcome!

If you like to socialize and read, consider joining our book club. When the books we read have been made into a movie, we often watch the movie as well. Our next discussion is on March 22 at 11 am at Bethel Church. We will read local author William Kent Krueger's novel *Ordinary Grace*. Our next discussion, on *Victoria and Abdul*, will be on July 19. The *Star Tribune* recently published an article on Senior Book Clubs, stating that "Joining a book club is one of the activities recommended by the Global Council for Brain Health to help strengthen the aging brain." Come strengthen your brain with us!

NEW!

Drop-In Tech Clinic

FREE!

2–4 pm, 4th Wednesday of Every Month

Need some help with your cellphone, tablet, or laptop? Come to our Drop-In Tech Clinic for some friendly, free help. First come, first served.

Next Session: March 28
Bethel Church Gym at 4120 17th Ave S
Call 612-729-5499 for more information.

Holiday Gifts Bring Cheer to NHS Clients

For the 2017 holiday season, Nokomis Healthy Seniors was blessed to partner with two community initiatives to bring holiday gifts and cheer to our participants.

Nine-year-old Madeline (Maddy) Brazelton raised \$1,000 to buy items—including hand lotion, crossword puzzle books, and snacks—to fill stockings for 60 Nokomis Healthy Seniors’ clients. She also included a hand-made card with each gift.

“We were so excited when Maddy and her mom approached us about this project,” said Megan Elliasen, Executive Director of Nokomis Healthy Seniors. “It was heartwarming to hear about a young person taking the initiative to spread holiday cheer to others.” An appreciative recipient said, “We can’t thank you enough for the stockings and treats. My mom died, and it really cheered me up this holiday. You have made Christmas brighter.”

As it has for several years, once again Allianz Life staff chose Nokomis Healthy Seniors as a recipient of its employee giving pro-

gram, donating and delivering goodies to seniors in our area. Said one grateful recipient: “To those at Allianz Life Insurance and Nokomis Healthy Seniors who delivered a surprise bag of goodies, I’d like to thank you for the gift. It reminded me of being 5 years old (90 years ago) and getting up on Christmas morning and checking my stocking to see what goodies Santa left for me. A big Thank You.”



Kelly Kamowski



**Could you use a little help
with downsizing, decluttering, or housekeeping?**

**Nokomis Healthy Seniors has someone to help with that!
\$25/hour. Call NHS at 612-729-5499 for more information.**



symptoms of depression, the first step is to talk to your doctor. You want to be sure to rule out other illnesses. Once diagnosed it is important to develop a treatment plan. This could include medication and therapy. Other actions that are known to help include exercise, avoidance of alcohol, a good diet, minimization of stress, volunteering, adequate sleep, and even yoga or meditation. Getting out and being with people or being part of a support group can be very helpful.

Treatment of depression is very effective. Between 70 to 90 percent of individuals experience a significant reduction in symptoms and an improved quality of life. Without treatment, people's symptoms worsen and loss of life—through suicide—is high among older adults.

Note: Kay King, the Community Educator & Older Adults Program Director at National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota, wrote this article in 2010. It has been edited for space and reprinted with her permission. She is presenting on "Gray Matters: Depression in Older Adults" at NHS's Health and Education series at on April 5 at Bethel Church (see page 6).

Mental Health Resources

If you're concerned about the mental health of an older person you know or have questions about your own mental health, please contact one of these organizations for help and resources.

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota**
Visit www.namihelps.org or call 651-645-2948 or 1-888-626-4435 about classes and support groups
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):** www.nami.org
- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):** www.nimh.nih.gov
- **Senior LinkAge Line:** www.minnesota.help.info or call 1-800-333-2433
- **Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention** has a 24-hour Friendship Line for Seniors: 1-800-971-0016
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-8255

Each Week at NHS

No RSVPs needed unless noted.

MONDAYS

9–11 am 500 Club (Bethel)
10–10:45 am Exercise (Faith)

TUESDAYS

10–10:45 am Exercise (Bethel)
1 pm Low Vision Support Group
(Nokomis Sq., 2nd Tues. only)

WEDNESDAYS

10 am Women's Art Group (Bethel)
10–11 am Yoga (Bethel)
1:30 pm Health and Enrichment Program (Nokomis Square, 2nd Wed. only)
Foot care (Nokomis Square): Call 612-729-5499 for appt. Nokomis Square residents only.

THURSDAYS

9:30–11:30 am Nurse Is In (Bethel): Blood pressure clinic, meet one-on-one with nurse, coffee and treats
9:30–11:30 am Adult coloring, puzzles, social time (Bethel)
10–10:45 am Exercise (Bethel)
11–11:30 am Chair Exercise (Bethel)
11 am Health and Enrichment (Bethel, 1st Thurs. only)
1 pm Caregiver Support Group (Bethel, 4th Thurs. only)
Foot care (Bethel) on Thursdays by appointment. Call 612-729-5499.

FRIDAYS

11 am–12 pm Yoga class (Bethel)
1–3 pm Diabetes Support Group (Nokomis Library, 1st Friday Only)

Locations

Bethel Church,
4120 17th Ave S
Faith Church,
3430 E. 51st St.
Nokomis Public Library, 5100
34th Ave S
Nokomis Square,
5015 35th Ave S

Special Events in 2018

Lunch and a Movie, Lunch at 11:15 am, followed by movie. Reservations required. Call the office at 612-729-5499.

March 8: *McFarland, USA*

April 12: *Going in Style*

May 10: *The Royal Wedding*

June 14: *Young at Heart*

July 12: *In America*

August 9: *Victoria and Abdul*

September 13: *Quartet*

Lunch and Bingo, Lunch at 11:15 am, followed by Bingo. Call 612-729-5499 for a reservation today!

March 29, May 31, August 30

Health & Enrichment Programs

All programs are free (unless noted) and open to the public. Beverages and treats are provided. If you need a ride to any activities, please call the NHS office at 612-729-5499.

@ Bethel Church

4120 17th Ave S
11:00 am,
on First Thursdays

March 22

Book Club: *Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Krueger (local author)

April 5

Gray Matters: Depression in Older Adults

Kay King, National Alliance on Mental Illness—Minnesota (NAMI)

May 3

**Reverse Mortgages—
All You Need to Know**

Legal Aid

June 7

Senior Oral Care

July 19

Book Club: *Victoria and Abdul*, by Shrabani Basu

(Join us for the movie on August 9th. Note: date was changed because of July 4th holiday)

@ Nokomis Square

5015 35th Ave S
1:30 pm,
on Second Wednesdays

March 14

Gentle Transitions: Decluttering Your Home

Christine Daves, Think Organized, Certified Organizer

April 11

The Wonderful World of Faberge

Carol Rudie, The Russian Museum of Art

May 9

How Do Those Community Solar Farms Work?

Lissa Pawlish

June 13

Who Will Pay for My Care If I Run Out of Money?

Genevieve Gaboriault, Legal Aid

July 11

Essential Oils for Seniors

Sherry Graham

Nurse Is In

Get your blood pressure checked, consult with a nurse, or schedule a foot care session. Or, just stop in to chat over a cup of coffee and baked goods. The clinic is free, but there is a \$30 charge for foot care.

When: Every Thursday morning from 9:30 am–11:30 am at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, 4120 17th Avenue South.

Exercise Classes

NHS offers exercise classes Monday–Friday at Bethel Church, 4120 17th Ave S, unless noted.

Exercise: Mondays (at Faith Lutheran, 3430 E. 51st St.), Tuesdays & Thursdays (at Bethel), 10–10:45 am, \$2 suggested donation

Yoga: Wednesday 10–11 am, and Friday 11 am–12 pm (at Bethel), \$4 suggested donation

Chair Exercise: Thursdays (at Bethel) 11–11:30 am, \$1 suggested donation

Support Groups

Free and open to the public

Diabetes Support Group

Nokomis Public Library, 5100 34th Ave S
The first Friday of each month, 1–3 pm.

Low Vision Group

Nokomis Square Cooperative, 5015 35th Ave S
The second Tuesday of each month at 1 pm.
Facilitator: Vision Loss Resources representative

Caregiver Support Group

Bethel Lutheran Church, 4120 17th Ave S
The fourth Thursday of the month at 1 pm.
Open to all who are caregivers for loved ones.

Bathing Assistance?

We partner with Fairview Home Care for all our seniors' nursing home care needs. Fairview has a Community Wellness Division that will provide an hour-long visit

for a bath for Nokomis

Healthy Seniors clients at a substantially reduced cost.

Please call the office at

612-729-5499 for details.



Do You Know the Services We Offer?

Blood Pressure Clinics / Health Support

Nurse Is In blood pressure clinic (Thurs. am)
Health and Enrichment programs
Foot care, by appointment, Thursdays at Bethel or in-home; Wednesdays at Nokomis Square (available only to Nokomis Square residents)

Transportation

Medical/dental appointments, pharmacy, grocery shopping

Volunteer Matches

Friendly visiting, grocery shopping, dog walking

Senior Helpline

Referrals and resources for almost any need
Handyman help

Home Care by RNs and Home Health Aides (provided through Fairview Health Services)

Assessments and health teaching
Personal care—bathing assistance, light housekeeping, and meal preparation
Medication management

Support Groups, Health, and Education

Caregiver support group
Low vision support group
Diabetes support group
Monthly health programs
Weekday exercise and yoga classes

Social Activities

Lunch & a Movie, Lunch & Bingo, 500 Club, Art Group

For information on any of these services, please call the NHS office at 612-729-5499



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Enjoy Books? And Stimulating Discussions?

Join us for Book Club!

March 22: *Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Krueger (local author)

July 19: *Victoria and Abdul* by Shrabani Basu



A recent *Star Tribune* article about book clubs for older adults reported that “joining a book club is one of the activities recommended by the Global Council for Brain Health to help strengthen the aging brain.” Call the office at 612-729-5499 for more information.

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