Working with Residents with Mental Illness

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Mental Illness

Over 26% of Americans will experience mental illness in their adult lives.
Alzheimer’s Disease

- 1 in 3 seniors dies with Alzheimer’s or another dementia
- 1 in 9 people aged 65 and older (11%) has Alzheimer’s disease
- About 1/3 of people age 85 and older (32%) have Alzheimer’s disease


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Dementia Plus

- Approximately 40% experience depression
- Up to 70% show signs of anxiety
- Approximately 25% of people with advanced dementias have psychotic symptoms
- More than 50% of those with Alzheimer’s disease display psychotic symptoms at some point


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Mental Illness in Senior Housing

- Community dwelling elders have a 10-16% depression rate; assisted livings and nursing homes have 40%
- 50% of seniors diagnosed with depression also have significant anxiety
- Older adults (especially men) in the US have the highest suicide rate of any age group
- Approximately 20% of older adults are substance abusers and the number is growing

Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly

Six buildings with 1200 apartments and 1500 residents

Brighton MA
  Three buildings on one campus – 705 apartments, 900+ residents
  - Ulin House – 242
  - Leventhal House – 254
  - Genesis House – 209

Newton MA
  - Coleman House - 146
  - Golda Meir House - 199

Framingham MA
  - Shillman House - 150

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Demographics

- 50% Russian
- 23% Chinese
- 12% American-born
- 15% Others
- 90+% very low, extremely low income
- 21 languages spoken

Demographics

- Approximately 60% (720) receive in-home assistance
- 250-300 nursing home eligible
- Some residents <65 with complex psycho-social needs
- Average age is over 80
- Over 550 over 85
- Average age at EOP 86 (83.5 to NH, 88.5 to Death)
- Average LOS is 12.7 years (12.5 Death, 12.9 NH)
Staffing

- Corporate
- Resident Services
  - Resident Services Coordinators (10 FT, 3 PT)
  - Dining Services (20ish FT and PT)
  - Fitness and Wellness (3 PT)
  - Generations Together (2 PT)
  - Congregate Housing Services Program (2 FT)
  - Computer Centers (1 FT, volunteers)
  - Convenience Stores (volunteers)
  - Transportation (1 FT)
- Maintenance
- Site Representatives

Rationale for Mental Health Initiative

- Prevalence of mental illness
- Prevalence of dementia
- Community impact:
  - Other residents
  - Families
  - Staff
Mental Health Initiative

✓ Problem
✓ Grant and Partnership
✓ Training Year I
✓ Training Year 2
✓ Training Year 3/Guide

Tips and Techniques for Supporting Residents with Mental Illness:
A Guide for Staff in Housing for Older Adults

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Who Might Benefit from Using This Guide?

✓ Anyone who interacts with people who have mental health issues and/or challenging behaviors or moods.

✓ The guide can also be used to train para-professionals, non-professionals, residents, family members and others.

Common Questions

✓ What behaviors should prompt staff to intervene?

✓ When is it time to involve community partners (spiritual leaders, mental health services, protective services, police …)?

✓ How do I access the mental health services in my neighborhood?

✓ When do I set boundaries and expectations?
Essentials

- Basic assessment skills
- De-escalation techniques
- Tips and techniques for speaking with someone who may have mental illness
- Staff collaboration: “Residents at Risk”
- Working with residents and families
- A list of community partners and resources

Case Studies

- Hoarding
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Dementias
- Is it Depression or Dementia?
- Delirium
- Personality Disorders
- Substance Abuse
- Bipolar Disorder
- Psychosis
  - Schizophrenia
  - Fixed Delusions
  - Paranoia
Why might a person be hostile or aggressive?

- Frustration
- Fear
- Disappointment
- Confusion
- Memory loss
- Psychosis, especially paranoia
- Feeling powerless (real or perceived)
- Acute illness
- Medication reaction
- Lack of sleep
- Intoxication (alcohol or drugs)
- Insecurity
- Loss of control
- Lack of choices
- Change in physical ability

Paranoia

Paranoia – a form of psychosis characterized by organized delusions of persecution (e.g. thinking people are against them).

- People who suffer from paranoia are often isolated and feel that they can not depend on anyone.
- Can represent a sudden change in the way a resident is behaving.
Speaking with Someone with Paranoia

- Use simple sentences
- Be as clear as possible
- Have the resident restate what you have said
- State what your perceptions are while acknowledging the resident may feel differently
- Anticipate triggers
- Try to have positive interactions not based on her/his symptoms
- Acknowledge her/his strengths and the positives s/he offers

For more information visit jche.org/guide to read, download or print the full guide

Thank you!