Mental Health Needs of Older Adults

www.nln.org/ACES
Essential Nursing Actions

| Assess Function and Expectations | Assess, respond to, and respect an older adult’s functional status and strengths, wishes, and expectations.  
|                                | Determine the older adult’s function and expectations, along with cognition, mood, culture, physiologic status, and comfort to obtain a comprehensive assessment of health care needs.  
|                                | Use standardized assessment tools to assess the older adult’s individual aging pattern. |
| Coordinate and Manage Care  | Manage chronic conditions, including atypical presentations, in daily life and during life transitions to maximize function and maintain independence.  
|                                | Assist older adults and families/caregivers to access knowledge and evaluate resources.  
|                                | Advocate during acute exacerbations of chronic conditions to prevent complications. |
| Use Evolving Knowledge  | Understand geriatric syndromes and unique presentations of common diseases in older adults.  
|                                | Access and use emerging information and research evidence about the special care needs of older adults and appropriate treatment options.  
|                                | Interpret findings and evaluate clinical situations in order to provide high quality nursing care based on current knowledge and best practices. |
| Make Situational Decisions | Analyze risks and benefits of care decisions in collaboration with the interdisciplinary team and the older adult, family, and caregivers.  
|                                | Evaluate situations where standard treatment recommendations need to be modified to manage care in the context of the older adult’s needs and life transitions.  
|                                | Consider the older adult’s wishes, expectations, resources, lived experiences, culture, and strengths when modifying care approaches. |
Assess Function and Expectations

• Ask the question…

What is current function and how far is current function from baseline?
Common Mental Health Issues Seen in Older Adults

- Cognitive Issues
- Mood Issues
- Anxiety
Functioning as a Predictor

- Physical Assessments
- Mental Health Assessments
- Separate…Equal…and Intertwined
Atypical is the Norm with Cognitive Issues
Cognitive Disorders

- Baseline functioning
- Time Frame of change
- Functional disparity
- Client perception
- Family perception
- Examiner’s perception
Coordination and Management of Care

- Atypical Presentation of Cognitive Issues
  - Baseline functioning
  - Time Frame of change
  - Client perception
  - Family perception
  - Examiner’s perception
Depression

- Transition
  - Interest
  - Appetite
  - Behavior
  - Sleep
Coordination and Management of Care

• Atypical Presentation of Mood Disorders
  
  Baseline functioning
  Time Frame of change
  Client perception
  Family perception
  Examiner’s perception
Anxiety

TRANSITION

BEHAVIORS

SYMPTOM OF DEPRESSION

SYMPTOM OF DEMENTIA

BASELINE
ANXIETY

- RESTLESSNESS
- SLEEP

ANXIETY

- ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING

ANXIETY

- COPING MECHANISMS
- COGNITIVE APPROACH
Mental Health Assessments

- Mini-Cog
- Geriatric Depression Scale
- Caregiver Strain Index
- Recognition of Dementia in hospitalized older adults
- Short Michigan Alcohol Screening Tool
But you’re doing ok for your age
Use Evolving Knowledge

- Geriatric Syndromes – clusters of related symptoms that are complicated...
- overwhelming to practitioners…and often overlooked
- Dementia…Delirium …and Depression
Make Situational Decisions

- Do physical outcomes outweigh psychological outcomes?
- Who gets to make the choice?
- Can a situation be too safe?
The discussion should start with…

- “What risks are you willing to take to optimize the quality of your life?”
- “Who do you talk with about decisions you make?”
- “How would you know if you started to need help?”
Changing Perceptions of Older Adults

• Mood and Cognitive Issues are NOT an expected outcome of aging

• Collaborative approach by including the older adult

• Self Awareness as the Health Care Professional of bias, feeling overwhelmed and hopeless interpretations of issues
“Yes I’m 100 years old but don’t tell anybody because as soon as you do they won’t think I know what I am talking about.”