



Pre-Appointment Decision Box

Depression in Older Adults

Choosing an Option to Improve Mood

Depression is characterized by continuous feelings of sadness and worthlessness, and a lack of desire to engage in formerly pleasurable activities. Depression may involve the body, mood, and thoughts. It may cause problems with thinking or memory and sometimes physical problems such as pain, digestion problems, difficulty sleeping, or fatigue.

There are several options to reduce depressive symptoms. Depending on your priorities, you may or may not decide to make a change. The choice is up to you. These options can cause benefits or harms and it is difficult to predict how they will work for you. We recommend that the decision take into account your values and priorities, and that you share this decision with a healthcare professional.

Consider the following:

1. What is my main health problem?
2. What do I need to do to meet my health goals?
3. Why do I need to do anything?
4. What else do I need to know?



What is most important to you?

SELECT WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU AND LOOK AT THE OPTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH IT.

✓ Choose a single item at a time.

Limit costs

OPTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUR MOOD:



Avoid problems in my relationships and in my daily activities

OPTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUR MOOD:



Increase my chances of survival

OPTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUR MOOD:



Avoid adverse effects

OPTION TO IMPROVE YOUR MOOD:



Avoid making a change if the impacts are uncertain

OPTION TO IMPROVE YOUR MOOD:



Other:

Options to improve your mood



Physical Activity Tailored to Older Adults

Good choices are walking, water exercises, balance or flexibility exercises, and weight training. The activity should make you feel warmer and make you breathe harder. You should be able to hold a conversation but may find it difficult to sing.

BENEFITS: Avoid depressive symptoms, increased health benefits.

HARMS: Physical activity can cause temporary muscle soreness after exercising. It can also cause muscle, bone, and joint problems.

PRACTICAL ISSUES: In general, to experience positive impacts from physical activity, people must be physically active for at least 3 weeks, either for 20 minutes 3 times a week, or for 2 hours once a week. Whatever the duration and frequency of the exercise, it takes time.



Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy aims to improve an individual's well-being and mental health by having them talk with a mental health provider. During psychotherapy, you learn about your condition and your mood, feelings, thoughts, and behaviours. Psychotherapy may be delivered in person, over the phone, or via the Internet.

BENEFITS: Decrease in depressive symptoms.

HARMS: You may experience negative emotions, stigmatization, or negative effects on relationships.

PRACTICAL ISSUES: Your family doctor can refer you to a psychotherapist. There may be a wait list of up to one year, depending on the problem. If you use a psychotherapist in the private sector, there may be a cost of \$100-\$225 per session. It is recommended that you discuss this with your health care provider.



Antidepressants

Antidepressants are drugs used to treat depressive disorders. Clinicians generally recommend they be introduced gradually and taken on a daily basis.

BENEFITS: Decrease in depressive symptoms.

HARMS: Increased risk of dying, increased adverse effects including thoughts of suicide or self-harm and reversible adverse effects including intestinal bleeding, diarrhea, dry mouth, fatigue, headache.

PRACTICAL ISSUES: Antidepressants are generally covered by public insurance plans but you may have to pay to get your prescription.



Massage therapy

Massage therapy consists of receiving massages from a qualified professional on a regular basis.

BENEFITS: Decrease in depressive symptoms.

HARMS: Increase in adverse effects including discomfort, pain, bruises, fatigue and headaches. Risk of allergic reaction to massage oil.

PRACTICAL ISSUES: One massage can cost \$40-\$140. Some private insurance plans may refund the cost.



Light therapy

Light therapy consists of exposure to daylight or to an artificial light that mimics natural outdoor light. The light is administered for a prescribed amount of time and, in some cases, at a specific time of day.

BENEFITS: Decrease in depressive symptoms.

HARMS: Increase in adverse effects including temporary blurred vision, eye strain, irritation, irritability, headache, or nausea.

PRACTICAL ISSUES: To be effective, you will generally need to undergo light therapy daily. You also have to buy the equipment.



Wait and monitor

Waiting and monitoring consists of keeping an eye on your stress levels without undertaking treatment or changing your lifestyle.

BENEFITS: Avoid making a change if impacts are uncertain, avoid the inconvenience associated with support options and time to find solutions on your own.

HARMS: Increased risk of dying, increased likelihood of needing to live in a long-term care home. Depression can impair a person's relationships with family and friends.

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