

Mental Health

Research suggests that older adults may have difficulty recognizing symptoms of anxiety and depression. As a caregiver, you may notice signs they might overlook and be able to help.



Recognize the Signs

Signs of depression or anxiety in older adults include but are not limited to **isolating**, **changes in appetite**, **low mood**, **changes in personal hygiene**, **loss of interest**, **sleep changes**, **risky behaviors**, and **substance abuse**.

Lifestyle Changes

If you notice subtle changes in your loved one, encourage positive **lifestyle adjustments**. Try being active together, aim for seven to nine hours of sleep, and keep connected with friends and family. **Eating healthier** may help too. Some studies show the **low-sodium “DASH Diet”** can reduce depression risk.

Professional Help

Help your loved one schedule an appointment with their primary care doctor. The doctor may refer them to a **psychologist** or **social worker** for therapy, or a **psychiatrist** for medication. Be aware that certain depression and anxiety medications might not be prescribed for older adults due to potential drug interactions.

Depression and Dementia

Depression is common in people with dementia and can **share many of the same symptoms**. It may also be an **early indicator of dementia**, making it crucial to seek help as soon as changes are noticed.

Technology Support

If leaving the house is difficult for your loved one, you can **access mental health services through**:

- Telehealth appointments with doctors and therapists.
- Online pharmacies.
- Online support groups.