



Improving the mental health of the community through awareness, advocacy, and support.

**Mental Health America of Northeast Florida**

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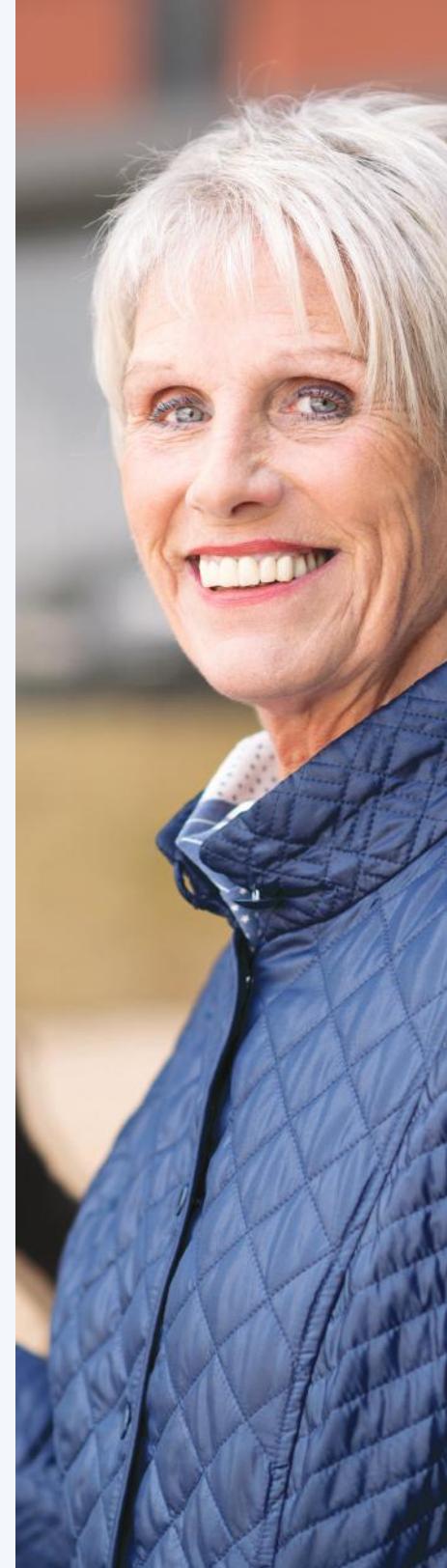
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Living with  
**DEPRESSION  
IN OLDER ADULTS**



We all have something  
special to give.

If you or someone you know is in crisis now, seek help immediately.  
Call United Way crisis center **211**. Or dial **911** for immediate assistance.





**Did you know** that more than two million of the 34 million Americans age 65 and older suffer from some form of depression?

### WHAT IS DEPRESSION IN OLDER ADULTS

Depression affects more than 19 million Americans every year regardless of age, race, gender, or wealth. And while depression is not a normal part of the aging process, research indicates that it can occur when other physical health conditions are present such as Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, cancer, and arthritis. It is also more prevalent in older adults that lose a spouse or have high healthcare costs. However, clinical depression is never a "normal" response to aging and should be treated as a serious medical illness.

### WHO GETS DEPRESSION?

Research has discovered that more than two million of the 34 million Americans age 65 and older suffer from some form of depression. And it is especially likely in older adults with physical health conditions. For example, nearly a quarter of the 600,000 people who experience a stroke in a given year will experience clinical depression. And one-third of widows and widowers meet the criteria for depression in the first month after the death of their spouse, with half of these individuals remaining clinically depressed after one year. Suicide is another very real issue when it comes to depression in older adults.

### SYMPTOMS

Unfortunately, symptoms of depression are often overlooked and untreated when they coincide with other medical illnesses or life events that commonly occur as people age. The following are signs of depression to look out for:

- Withdrawal from friends, family, and other social activities
- Sadness and hopelessness
- Lack of enthusiasm, energy, or motivation
- Anger and rage
- Overreaction to criticism
- Feelings of being unable to meet expectations
- Poor self-esteem or guilt
- Indecision, lack of concentration, or forgetfulness
- Restlessness and agitation
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Thoughts of suicide or death

### TREATMENT

The good news is that depression is very treatable. More than 80 percent of all people with depression can be successfully treated with medication, psychotherapy, or a combination of the two.



### HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

**MHA offers online screenings to help identify symptoms, and to find the help you need to feel your best and healthiest. To learn more about our screenings, visit the MHA website at [www.mhajax.org](http://www.mhajax.org). Our screenings are confidential, online, and will take just a few minutes of your time.**