



Senior Life
Solutions®



LET'S TALK ABOUT STIGMA 5 COMMON MYTHS THAT KEEP SENIORS FROM SEEKING SUPPORT



If you grew up in a time when people didn't talk much about mental health, you are not alone. For many older adults, feelings like sadness, worry, or loneliness were something you were expected to "push through." Maybe you were taught to keep personal struggles private. Maybe you saw others get judged for asking for help.

But here's the truth: mental health is part of overall health, just like blood pressure, arthritis, or diabetes. And getting support is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign that you are taking your well-being seriously.

During Mental Health Awareness Month, let's take a closer look at some of the most common myths that keep seniors from getting help, and what's really true.

Myth 1: "Feeling down is just part of getting older."

It's true that aging comes with real challenges. Retirement, health changes, loss of loved ones, changes in independence, and moving away from familiar routines can all affect mood.

But ongoing sadness, low energy, irritability, or feeling hopeless are not things you have to accept as "normal." Many older adults can and do feel better with the right support. If something feels off for weeks at a time, it deserves attention, not dismissal.

See the next page for more.

Myth 2: “I should be able to handle this on my own.”

Independence is a point of pride for a lot of people, especially those who have spent a lifetime caring for others. But needing help with your mental health is no different from needing help with your physical health.

Most of us would not tell someone with chest pain to “tough it out.” We would say, “Let’s get that checked.” Emotional pain deserves the same care.

Support can look like a conversation, new coping tools, help with sleep and routine, treatment for depression or anxiety, or a plan to reconnect with things that bring meaning to your days. Getting help is a way to take action.

Myth 3: “If I talk about it, people will think I’m ‘crazy.’”

This is one of the most painful myths because it keeps people silent. Depression and anxiety are medical conditions, not character flaws. Feeling overwhelmed after a major life change is human. Feeling lonely after losing a spouse or moving away from friends makes sense.

Talking to a professional does not mean you are “crazy.” It means you are being honest about what you are carrying.

Many people also worry that asking for help will make others see them differently. In reality, most families feel relieved when a loved one gets support. Often, the people around you already notice something has changed. They just don’t know how to help.

Myth 4: “My problems aren’t serious enough.”

A lot of seniors minimize what they’re experiencing. You might think, “Other people have it worse,” or “I don’t want to take resources away from someone else.” But you don’t have to hit a breaking point to deserve support.

You don’t need to wait until you can’t sleep, eat, or get out of bed. Early support can prevent things from getting worse and can improve day-to-day quality of life. If it is affecting your peace, your relationships, your energy, your appetite, your sleep, or your ability to enjoy life, it matters.

Myth 5: “Therapy won’t work for someone my age.”

It’s never too late to benefit from support. Older adults can absolutely see improvement with therapy, medication management (when appropriate), and lifestyle changes, especially when care is tailored to the realities of aging.

In fact, many seniors find therapy especially helpful because it provides a place to process grief, adjust to change, and learn strategies for managing worry and low mood. You have decades of life experience. Support helps you put that experience to work in a way that strengthens your well-being now.

Stigma thrives in silence, but it shrinks when we talk openly and kindly about what people go through. If you have ever told yourself, “I should be fine,” consider replacing that with: “I deserve to feel better.”

And if someone in your life seems withdrawn, unusually worried, quick to anger, or just not themselves, a simple check-in can mean a lot. You don’t need the perfect words, you just need to show you care.

WE CAN HELP.

Our hospital-based outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging or a chronic diagnosis. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community consultations.

Call us today at