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Geriatric Depression | Pacific Brain Health Center

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What is Geriatric or Late Life Depression?

Geriatric depression is a type of depression that affects older adults, typically those over the age of 65. Depression is a common mental health condition in older adults, and it can have a significant impact on their quality of life.

Most older persons are satisfied with their lives and are not psychologically predisposed to depression. Nevertheless, some experience a demoralization and despair resulting not only from incapacities due to aging but also from a sense of not having fulfilled their life expectations (e.g., leading up to and/or after retirement).

Geriatric depression can occur when older persons need to adapt to many adverse life experiences. They must adapt especially to the losses of relatives and friends. In these

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As a result, an adjustment disorder with depressed mood secondary to physical disability and/or chronic illness is among the most frequent causes of depressed mood among older individuals.

Symptoms of Geriatric Depression

Symptoms of geriatric depression may include persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or helplessness, loss of interest or pleasure in activities, changes in appetite or weight, sleep disturbances, fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, physical symptoms such as headaches or stomachaches, and thoughts of death or suicide.

Sources of Late-Life Depression

Geriatric depression can be caused by a variety of factors, including biological, psychological, and social factors. Medical conditions such as chronic pain, heart disease, or stroke, as well as medications commonly prescribed to older adults, can increase the risk of depression.

- Loss of a relationship
- Loss of body parts or function
- Loss of control or independence
- Chronic pain
- Guilt

Characteristics of Older Adults with Depression

- Do not complain of depression spontaneously

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Consequences of Geriatric Depression

Diagnosing and treating geriatric depression is essential for improving an individual's quality of life and preventing complications such as social isolation, cognitive decline, and increased risk of physical illness. Treatment may involve a combination of medication, therapy, and lifestyle changes such as exercise, social engagement, and stress management.

Our geriatric psychiatrist, [Dr. David Merrill](#), offers kind, compassionate, thorough clinical evaluations and follows depression treatment guidelines, helping the patient to stay connected with the activities and people who matter to them. Contact us at [310-582-7641](tel:310-582-7641) to schedule a consultation.

How You Can Help an Individual with Geriatric Depression

- Listen and understand
- Encourage expression of sadness/grief related to illness
- Offer specific and realistic reassurance
- Emphasize a constructive treatment plan
- Mobilize the patient's support system
- Combat learned helplessness
- Elicit expression of preferences, encourage active steps
- Psychiatric consultation for medications or [TMS](#)
- Persistent and out of proportion symptoms or suicidality

Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy

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Resources

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and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The deaf and hard of hearing can contact the Lifeline via TTY at 1-800-799-4889. All calls are confidential. Contact social media outlets directly if you are concerned about a friend's social media updates or dial 911 in an emergency. Learn more on the [Lifeline's website](#) or the [Crisis Text Line's website](#).

Contact Us

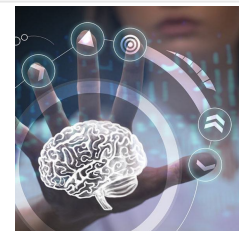
For a consultation or second opinion, Call us at 310-582-7641

[SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION →](#)



Brain Health Center Overview

[▶ PLAY VIDEO](#)



Written and reviewed by:

[The Pacific Neuroscience medical and editorial team](#)

We are a highly specialized team of medical professionals with extensive neurological and cranial disorder knowledge, expertise and writing experience.

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