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## The Facts about Depression in Later Life

Loss takes on many forms the older we get, 3.8 percent of people over age 55 residing independently in the community suffer from major depression in any given year. Many adults have more than one of the risk factors for depression. Some of these include social isolation, chronic medical illnesses or pain, loss of physical functioning, reliving bad past experiences, and recent significant loss.

Let's explore some of the myths surrounding depression!

**Myth:** Depression occurs only when people experience major trauma in life.

**Fact:** Depression is a commonly occurring mental health condition that may arise due to a variety of factors, including genetic influences, body changes, or life stresses.

**Myth:** Individuals dealing with depression usually can overcome it if they just work to cheer themselves up or pull themselves up by their bootstraps.

**Fact:** Depression is a complex medical and mental health condition that typically improves with a variety of approaches, which may include therapeutic support, social support, exercise, diet, rest, and medication.

**Myth:** Seeking assistance from a doctor or mental health professional is a sign of inability to handle problems or personal weakness.

**Fact:** Depression is a condition that anyone can experience. Seeking assistance from competent professionals often is necessary and signals wisdom, understanding, and strength.

Some key factors to help when dealing with depression are to seek medical care, increase support from family and community members, and focus on healthy living practices. If you are experiencing signs of depression, visit with your doctor or call 2-1-1 for confidential listening, support, and referral.

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