

# Post-Stroke Depression

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## Depression: It's Not Just Down in the Dumps



### Did you know...

- that an average of 25% of LTC residents have had a stroke?
- that up to half of all people who have had a stroke will experience some degree of depression?
- that other causes for depression include grief, medications, Parkinson's & Alzheimer's disease, alcohol abuse and sleep disorders.
- that depression rates are highest for seniors living in LTC Homes?



## Post-Stroke Depression

### Be Aware That...

- 🕒 Residents may become depressed right after a stroke or not until years later
- 🕒 Sometimes the signs of depression are mistaken for the effects of the stroke or aging
- 🕒 The signs of depression can be overlooked when a resident has difficulty speaking or thinking
- 🕒 It's important for a doctor to decide if the resident is depressed

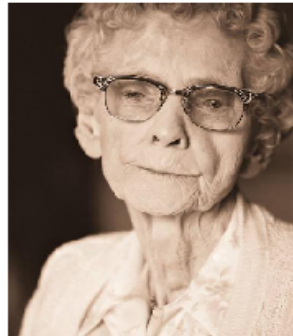
*If a resident is thinking about death, dying, or ending their life, report this information to your Team immediately*



## The Impact of Depression

Depression can:

- decrease energy and motivation
- increase death from stroke
- decrease thinking ability
- lead to suicidal thoughts
- decrease a resident's ability to care for and about themselves



## CAUTION: Signs of Depression



- Appetite and weight changes
- Trouble sleeping or always feeling tired
- Headaches, chronic pain, digestive problems
- Memory and concentration problems
- Problems making decisions
- Feeling sad, anxious, guilty, irritable or hopeless
- Feeling worthless
- Loss of interest in everything
- Withdrawing from others
- Confusion, feeling of living in a fog

*Remember! Many times, depression is not recognized or treated so it is important that you are aware of the signs of depression and share this information with the Team.*

## On the Road To Recovery



- ☑ The first step is to tell your Team if you notice the signs of depression.
- ☑ The resident will need to be seen by a doctor.
- ☑ The most common treatments are medications and counseling.
- ☑ Expect the resident to get better gradually and offer gentle encouragement. Even though activity and company are needed, too many demands can cause feelings of failure.
- ☑ Medications may take up to six weeks before you notice a change.

### What You Can Do



- ☑ Talk to the resident's family and friends. Find out what they were like before the stroke or other illness
- ☑ Find activities that make the resident feel better (exercise, music, watching videos, reading)
- ☑ Help the resident plan and structure the day. Break large tasks into smaller ones
- ☑ Allow the resident to do as much as possible for themselves
- ☑ Always communicate with caring and hope. Be accepting. Take the time to listen and let the resident talk about how they are feeling
- ☑ If the resident is feeling pain, make sure they get treatment to help the pain
- ☑ Have regular team discussions. Learn about the resident you look after from other staff and share what you know. It can help you identify mood changes

STROKE STRATEGY  
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