Improving outcomes for older people with depression and anxiety disorders

National Ageing Research Institute
3rd Annual Seminar – 7 September 2012
‘Mental Health and Ageing’

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beyondblue
An Australian community that understands depression and anxiety, empowers people to seek help, and support recovery, management and resilience
Prevalence in older people

• 10-15% older people affected by depression
• 34.7% in residential aged care
• 45% in hospital setting
• Greater risks for older Indigenous & CALD people
• Anxiety statistics unknown but believed to be higher

(National Ageing Research Institute (2009), Depression in older age: a scoping study.)
What Makes an older person more at risk of depression?

- An increase on physical health problems e.g. Heart disease, stroke, Alzheimer’s
- Chronic pain
- Side-effects from medication
- Losses: relationships, independence, work and income, self-worth, mobility & flexibility
- Social isolation
- Significant change in living arrangements
- Admission to hospital
People who are aged either 55-64 or 65+ are less likely to be aware about the prevalence of depression.

- General Population: 41%
- Those aged 55 – 64: 35%
- Those from non English speaking backgrounds: 40%
- Those ages 65+: 23%
While declining ‘social distance’ is apparent across all demographics, it remains higher amongst certain groups. For example, the following groups were less likely than the average (of 71%) to be willing for a person with depression to ‘marry into your family’:

- General Population: 71%
- Those from non English speaking backgrounds: 67%
- Those aged 55 - 64: 70%
- Those ages 65+: 51%
Perceptions of helpful behaviours

The following groups are more likely than the average (21%) to believe it is helpful to "put on a brave face and push on"

- Those with a grade 11 education or less (42%)
- Those of non English speaking backgrounds
- Those aged 55-64 (26%)
- Those aged 65+ (31%)
- Men (25%)

(2011/12 Depression Monitor)
Chronic illness and depression

- Bi-directional relationship between depression and chronic illness
- Depression causes worse outcomes for chronic illnesses
- Depression a risk factor for:
  - Heart disease
  - Stroke
  - Diabetes
- Many illnesses associated with an increased risk of depression

Ref: Clarke D, Currie K. Depression, anxiety and their relationship with chronic diseases: a review of the epidemiology, risk and treatment evidence. *MJA* 2009; 190: S54-60
Access to services

Access to mental health services is lowest among older people with only 25% accessing professional help

ABS National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results, 2007
Stigma among health professionals

- Limited course content specific to older age mental health
- Acceptance of depression in older people, `of course they are depressed’
- Stigma and ageism barriers to help
- Older people referred less frequently for specialist assessment.

National Ageing Research Institute, Scoping study of health professional education and training in older age depression and anxiety, Final Report, December 2010.
beyondblue’s work with older adults
‘I felt very tense, I was not sleeping and I thought I was dying sometimes.’ (Jack – 77 years old)

‘In those days it was something you would not mention, depression or anything like it.’

(Howard 64 year old)

Older adults who have experienced depression and anxiety
Campaign commenced in October 2011

- TV, print and radio ads
- Public convenience advertising
- Flyers in GPs’ surgeries
- Links to Seniors’ festivals around Australia
- Further dissemination in 2012
- Evaluation now underway.
Goals of the Campaign

• Reduce the stigma of depression and anxiety in older people
• Raise awareness amongst older people the depression and anxiety are illnesses which can be treated
• Encourage older people to seek help for depression and anxiety from health professionals
• Promote the message that “Depression is NOT a normal part of ageing”
I couldn’t stop worrying

I’ve always been a perfectionist, but a while ago, I found myself worrying constantly about things that weren’t really important – I was feeling anxious all the time. I didn’t think anything of it at first, but soon it all became too much.

My sister persuaded me to talk to my doctor who really helped. I wish I’d done it years ago. My anxiety is under control now and I’m slowly getting back to my old self.

Don’t let anxiety get the better of you. Talk to your doctor.

Depression and anxiety – it’s not a normal part of getting older.
To find out more visit www.beyondblue.org.au or call 1300 22 4636
I thought Grandad’s smile was broken

Visiting Grandad used to be fun. He'd hide lollies for me and do magic tricks. He'd always make me laugh.

But then, he stopped making jokes and he didn't want to play with me much. I asked Dad what was wrong and he said he didn't know, but he got Grandad to go and talk to the doctor.

I don't know what was wrong and I don't know what the doctor did, but after a while, I got my old Grandad back and his smile is as good as new!

Depression and anxiety – it's not a normal part of getting older. To find out more visit www.beyondblue.org.au or call 1300 22 4636

Beyond Blue messages are developed in consultation with people who have experienced depression and anxiety and their carers.
Radio ads

I didn’t want to talk about it

In the last five years, I’ve taken a few knocks. Losing my partner was the big one of course. And at times, the health hasn’t been great either.

I’m not one to complain, but I was really struggling. I felt sad all the time and that’s not like me. In the end I had a chat with my doctor and it turned out I had depression. I got some treatment and after a while, I was back on track.

So if you’re not feeling right, don’t keep it to yourself – have a word with your doctor.

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beyondblue resources are developed in consultation with people who have experienced depression and anxiety, and their carers.
TV ads

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi96EAJK7wo&feature=youtu.be
2. beyond maturityblues

• Volunteer peer educators delivering free community sessions
  – over 80,000 attendees since March 2007

• Supports beyondblue’s awareness-raising work/extends our networks/reach

• Large scale dissemination of resources and information (95,000 items annually)

• Specific sessions developed
  - CALD communities
  - Rural/Men/Veterans
  - Carers
`It was great to be able to speak with friends and Brian (Peer Educator) about my concerns – I have never spoken of these issues prior to today.

Thank you very much.’

Participant Women’s Support Group
Qld, Feb 2012
3. Professional Education to Aged Care (PEAC) program

- **beyondblue** has developed workshops on depression and anxiety disorders in older people for:
  - staff in residential care
  - staff in community care

- Workshops delivered nationally to the sector by licensees (NARI among 3 licensees)
Part 1 (all staff)

- Understanding depression and anxiety
- Depression and anxiety in older people
- Promoting residents’ mental health

Part 2 (registered staff only)

- Screening tools (inc Cornell)
- Treatment, referral & management
Implications for practice – residential workshop

- Effective reporting and communication systems
- Cornell Scale should trigger clinical follow-up
- Antidepressants less effective in people with dementia and depression
- Emerging positive research on the non-pharmaceutical management of depression and dementia.
Accredited training project

- Materials developed to enable RTOs to deliver content on depression and anxiety within Cert III aged care qualifications
- Resources free for RTOs
- Available from beyondblue website in September 2012
- Cert IV materials available next year
The Shed Online

• An **online social community** for men.

• Recreates “real life” Men’s Sheds – men can access health information, pick up a project or just talk.

• Founded by *beyondblue*, *Movember* and the *Australian Men’s Shed Association*.

• Over **5,200 members**, over **220,000 visits**.

• Majority of members **males 55+**
In 2009, beyondblue called for Australians aged 80 or over to share their stories about leading healthy, active lives – mentally and physically.

The response was overwhelming!
“At times, the heart gets enveloped by a blanket of snow. The snow can become ice or it can melt away – it is up to us!”

Maria Rosaria Oliveri Del Castillo, 89
Freemantle WA
“I suggest that older folk forget about age. Age is just a number – don’t sit and fade away... there are loads of things that you can DO!"

Terry Bradford, 92
Palmerston NT
"You're never too old. The body is a remarkable instrument. It can stretch and stretch, and get better all the time. Forget age!"

Bette an 86 year old yoga instructor
National Priority Driven Research Round 2011 - $1.336m:

• An RCT of the efficacy of adjunctive internet based CBTi in treating depression and anxiety in older men – Brain and Mind Research Institute

• Mixed methods investigation of anxiety and depression, contributing factors, and health services provided to manage it amongst older adults discharged from hospital – Monash uni and Southern Health

• A randomised, controlled trial of two psychological interventions for patients with late-life depression who have comorbid physical problems – University of Sydney

• Evaluating the efficacy of an online psychological intervention for partners of men with prostate cancer: A randomised controlled trial – Melb Health Urology Dept.

Other strategic research:

• Beyond Ageing Study (ANU) – completed 2011

• 45 and Up Study (Sax Institute) – to complete in 2014

• Emotional Wellbeing program (Macquarie University) – to complete in 2014
Gaps and areas for further action
Gaps and areas for action

Research gaps

– Anxiety in older people
– Diagnosis and screening tools
  esp. in older CALD and indigenous populations
– Non-pharmaceutical management of older people
  with depression/anxiety disorders and dementia
– Efficacy of psychological interventions
– Impact of retirement
– Social isolation
– Suicide in older men
Areas for future action

Better mental health treatment for older people:

- Integration of mental and physical health care
- Aged care interface with primary health care
- Access to psychological services
- Clinical guidelines for older adults
- More specialist older adult mental health services
- Addressing stigma among health professionals working with older adults
- Promoting the consumer & carer ‘voice’.
Promote Healthy ageing

- Healthy diet
- Regular exercise
- Keep your mind active
- Reduce stress
- Keep in touch with family and friends &/or get involved with a club
- Go out
STOP SHOWING OFF... I KNOW IT'S YOUR WALKING STICK.
For more information:

• bb infoline: 1300 22 4636

• bb website: www.beyondblue.org.au

• Free information resources can be ordered via website or through infoline