



## Program

# Healthy IDEAS

### History

About 15-20% of US adults aged 65 and older experience depressive symptoms such as sadness, inactivity, trouble concentrating or making decisions, and sleep problems. Not only does depression negatively affect the quality of life of older adults, it can be life threatening. Home- and community-based service providers especially care coordinators and case managers, typically serve the older adults at greatest risk of having undetected and untreated depression: those who have multiple chronic health problems and functional disability, lack financial resources, and are socially isolated. Responding to this public health need in 2002, the Healthy IDEAS program was developed through an academic-community partnership led by interdisciplinary faculty at Baylor College of Medicine and the Houston VA Health Services Research Center and leaders of Care for Elders community agencies.

The program aimed to:

- Reduce the severity of depressive symptoms in older clients of community agencies
- Reach frail, high-risk and diverse older adults, often overlooked and under-treated
- Train agency staff to provide and deliver an evidence-based intervention for depression to older adults in their caseloads
- Improve linkages between community aging service providers and healthcare professionals through appropriate referrals, better communication and effective partnerships.

### Program Description

Healthy IDEAS (Identifying, Depression, Empowering Activities for Seniors) is an evidence-based program that incorporates four evidence based components into the ongoing delivery of care-management or caregiver-support services to older individuals in the home environment:

- Screening for symptoms of depression and assessing their severity
- Educating older adults and caregivers about depression
- Linking older adults to primary care and mental health providers
- Empowering older adults to manage their depression through a behavioral activation approach that encourages involvement in meaningful activities

It is implemented over a 3-6-month period, through at least three face-to-face visits in the client's home and at least three telephone contacts. Healthy IDEAS ensures older adults get the help they need to manage symptoms of depression and live full lives. Thus, clients with more severe depression symptoms may require more contacts or attention beyond an initial intervention period. With support from his/her care manager, each client chooses realistic goal(s) to obtain positive outcomes (e.g., pleasure, feelings of accomplishment) and to decrease negative outcomes (e.g., feeling sad, tired, lonely).

## Program Outcomes

Healthy IDEAS is a national model with measurable results and demonstrated benefits for older adults, service providers and community mental/behavioral health practitioners. Evidence of effectiveness to decrease functional disability associated with depression was demonstrated by the program evaluation.

Older Adults (at 6 months) (1):

- Significantly more participants knew how to get help for depression (68% versus 93%) (p=.0033)
- Reported increasing activity helped them feel better (72% versus 89%) (p=.0332)
- Reported reduced pain (16% versus 45%) (p=.003)
- Fewer symptoms of depression (p<.01)
- Better ability to recognize and self-treat symptoms (p=.0174)
- Improved well-being through achievement of personal goals (p=.0020)

Participating community agency providers completed anonymous surveys after program implementation and reported the following (2):

- Service Providers experienced:
  - Expanded capacity to address depression
  - Better communication and stronger partnerships with mental health providers
  - Opportunity to deliver a proven, successful program that addresses critical client needs
  - Improved staff knowledge and confidence in helping clients
- Community Mental/Behavioral Health Partners experienced:
  - Increased opportunity to work with diverse populations of older adults
  - Strengthened connections to community agencies

## Program References

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2. Casado, B. L., Quijano, L. M., Stanley, M. A., Cully, J. A., Steinberg, E. H. & Wilson, N. L. (2008) Healthy IDEAS: Implementation of a depression program through community-based case management. *The Gerontologist*, 48(6), 828-838.
3. Frank, J. C., Coviak, C. P., Healy, T. C., Belza, B. & Casado, B. L. (2008) Addressing fidelity in evidence-based health promotion programs for older adults. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 27(1), 4-33.
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