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ELDER CARE

A Resource for Interprofessional Providers

Community Resources for Older Adults

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During clinical visits, healthcare providers will often determine that a patient has a need best filled by a community resource. This Elder Care will focus on community resources found in most areas.

Area Agencies on Aging

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) were created in 1973 through the Older American's Act (OAA), to help older Americans (60+), younger adults with disabilities, and their caregivers to live quality lives in their homes and communities with independence and dignity. AAAs are a nationwide network of nonprofit agencies designed to assist clients with expert information and resources.

AAAs assist with coordination of care using a variety of home and community-based services to maximize health outcomes and empower clients to manage their chronic conditions. Most agencies serve a specific geographical area, so most states have several AAAs. You will have to investigate to determine what services your regional AAA provides but common programs include providing long-term care ombudsmen, insurance counseling, Medicaid/Medicare planning, end-of-life planning, caregiver support, information on meals and nutrition, fall prevention classes, and information about rights and benefits. They are also knowledgeable about other local resources, so even if they don't offer a particular service, they likely will be able to provide a referral to an appropriate agency. <https://www.n4a.org/>.

Eldercare Locator

Eldercare Locator is a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging that connects older adults and their caregivers to trustworthy local support resources. Online searches are available at eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx or you can call 1-800-677-1116 to speak to an information specialist.

Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's disease care, support, and research. Their mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research, provide and enhance care and support for those affected by dementia, and reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health, making it a good resource even for those who do not have dementia. The association runs support groups, both in person and via an online community forum called "ALZConnected" www.alzconnected.org/. They also provide comprehensive online resources and information about dementia caregiving, and a free online navigation tool that helps people determine their needs and develop a plan of action www.alzheimersnavigator.org/. You can find your local chapter at www.alz.org/local_resources/find_your_local_chapter?state.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

The National Alliance on Mental Illness is the nation's largest mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for those affected by mental illness. They offer education and support groups, free information and referral services, and host public awareness events. You can find your local NAMI at www.nami.org/ or call the NAMI helpline at 1-800-950-6264.

Senior Centers

Senior centers connect older adults to vital community services that can help them stay healthy and independent. More than 60% of senior centers are designated focal points for delivery of OAA services - allowing older adults to access multiple services in one place. They offer a variety of services including health, fitness and wellness programs, public benefit counseling, employment assistance, volunteer opportunities, education and art

TIPS ABOUT USING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- Referrals to community resources can help maintain the health and wellbeing of your patients.
- Community-based services are designed to help community-dwelling older adults remain safely in their homes and can often delay or prevent institutionalization.
- Often older adults (and often many clinicians) do not know about the range of services available or where to find them. Key resources are outlined in this Elder Care.

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programs. Research shows that older adults who participate in senior center programs can learn to manage and delay the onset of chronic disease and experience measurable improvements in their physical, social, spiritual, emotional, mental, and economic well-being. You can find your local senior center at www.seniorcenterdirectory.com.

Adult Day Services Association

For older adults who need assistance during the day, adult day care services can be helpful. Adult day care services include personal and nursing care, group meals, therapeutic exercises, and social and recreational activities. Most adult day care centers, like senior centers, are supported through public and non-profit organizations. Fees may range from a few dollars to several hundred dollars a day, depending on the services needed. The National Adult Day Services Association can help find a provider in your area <https://www.nadsa.org/>.

Meals on Wheels America

Ten million seniors are at risk for food insecurity. Meals on Wheels is a federally supported program designed to meet the nutritional and social needs of seniors. The program relies on volunteers who enable 225 million meals to be delivered to 2.4 million seniors each year. Find a local program at <https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/find-meals>.

Family Caregiver Alliance

The Family Caregiver Alliance provides quality information, support, and resources to family caregivers <https://www.caregiver.org/>. Their Family Care Navigator can assist in finding local service and resources <https://www.caregiver.org/family-care-navigator>. National resources can be found here: https://www.caregiver.org/state-list-views?field_state_tid=152.

National Resource Center on Native American Aging

Funded through the Administration on Aging, the National Resource Center on Native American Aging (NRCNAA) is committed to identifying Native elder health and social issues. Through education, training, and technical assistance, they assist in developing community-based solutions to improve the quality of life and delivery of related support services to the Native aging population. To search for services by state, use the Native Service Locator www.nrcnaa.org/service-locator or call 800-896-7628.

Suicide Prevention Hotlines

Each year almost 45,000 Americans die by suicide, and for each suicide, there are 25 attempted suicides. Older adults, particularly older men, are a high-risk group. If someone is in crisis, call 911 or one of the hotlines below.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1800 273-TALK (8255). Available 24/7.

Crisis Text Line

Text "HOME" to 741741. Available 24/7.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Treatment Referral Helpline

1800-662-HELP (4357). Available 24/7

State Health Insurance Assistance

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) is a free health benefits counseling service for Medicare beneficiaries and their families or caregivers. SHIP is an independent program funded by federal agencies and is not affiliated with the insurance industry. The SHIP locator can be found here <https://www.shiptacenter.org/>.

Benefits Checkup®

BenefitsCheckUp® is a free service of the National Council on Aging. It is an online tool that connects older adults with benefits they may qualify for by matching patient specific needs to benefit programs and eligibility requirements. <https://www.benefitscheckup.org/>.

American Bar Association Free Legal Answers™

Free Legal Answers™ is a virtual legal advice clinic. Qualifying users post their civil legal question to their state's website. Users will then be emailed when their question receives a response. Attorney volunteers, who must be authorized to provide pro bono assistance in their state, log in to the website, select questions to answer, and provide legal information and advice. Volunteer attorneys will not answer criminal law questions. Participating states have their own page where qualifying residents will post their question - <https://abafreelegalanswers.org>.

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide

Membership is not required to take advantage of free tax preparation from IRS-certified volunteers. Tax-Aide locations are open annually January/early-February to April 15. <https://secure.aarp.org/applications/VMILocator/searchTaxAideLocations.action>.

Interprofessional care improves the outcomes of older adults with complex health problems.

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