



***Breaking the Ice-olation:  
Social Connection in Later Life***

**May 24, 2018**

**Senior Friendly Care Intersectoral Conference**

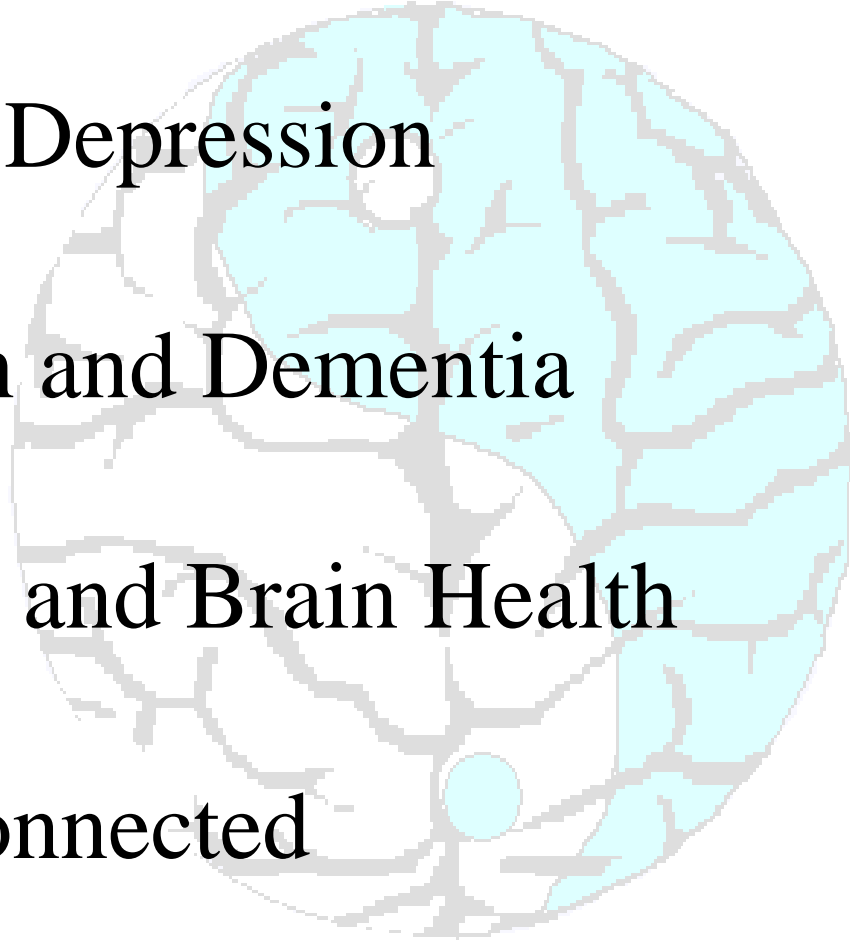
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# Overview

- Aging and Depression
- Depression and Dementia
- Loneliness and Brain Health
- Staying Connected



# Cognitive Symptoms of Depression: Why so dominant in depressed older adults?

Due to overlap in MCI, dementia and depression (Mast, 1995)  
(conversion rates)

Most common differential diagnosis dementia/ depression

Due to normal age-related memory changes that disadvantage cognition

Due to effects of physical (e.g., vascular, diabetes) and mental (e.g. anxiety) comorbidities that impact cognitive function

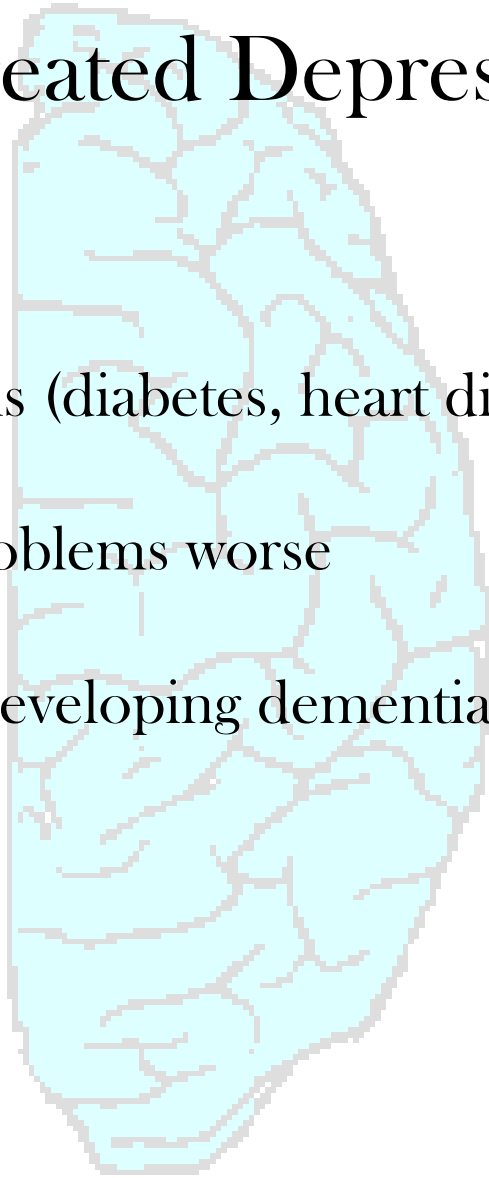


# Risk Factors for Dementia

- Reduce prevalence by 50% if remove:
- Smoking
- Low Education
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease and
- Depression

# Untreated Depression

- Leads too ...
- Physical Health problems (diabetes, heart disease, stroke, arthritis)
- Makes current health problems worse
- May double the risk of developing dementia later in life



# Resiliency Assets

- Relationships
- Emotional Intelligence
- Competence
- Optimism
- Coping Skills

# Loneliness

- Loneliness is an emotion of feeling distressed or anxious due to a perceived lack of connection with others.
- “Social pain”



# Loneliness

- Pervasive throughout the life span

# Loneliness and Health

- Loneliness and low numbers of social connections are associated with a reduction in lifespan similar to that caused by smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

# Loneliness and Health

- Heart health,
- Immunity
- Cognitive functioning and
- Stress hormone (cortisol) levels.
- Sustained loneliness can lead to mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression.

# Stress Strategies

- Psychology Foundation of Canada (PFC)
- Mental Health App

# **Comparing Telehealth and Clinic-based Treatments for Older Adults with Clinical Depression and Anxiety**

- (Khatri et al., in press)
- The main contribution of the study is that it was the first time that online video conferencing was used to provide group CBT that was comparable in process and outcome to face-to-face group CBT.

# Baycrest

- **Online Caregiver Support Group**
- Baycrest and the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) have created a secure, user-friendly video conferencing software that enables group members to exchange ideas, offer encouragement, solve problems and receive therapeutic support from a trained social worker.

# Baycrest

- **Baycrest's Seniors Support Program**
- Volunteers in the Seniors Support Program provide support to seniors and family caregivers living in the community by consistently staying in touch with them.

# Conclusion

- Social connection is vital to brain health.
- Stay connected, Stay healthy!



**Thank you!**