

I want to focus this month's article on maintaining a healthy heart and mind.

Depression is always a concern, but it seems to be made even more aware this time of year around the holidays and starting of a new year.

Older adults are less likely to seek treatment for depression on their own, most grew up in a society that frowned upon mental health problems, for fear of being called crazy or something worse.

Family conflicts, money, poor health and death of a spouse are likely to increase a person's depression and may bring thoughts of contemplating suicide.

Many depressed seniors don't feel sad at all. They may complain instead of low motivation, lack of energy or physical problems. In fact, physical complaints, such as arthritis pain or headaches that have gotten worse, are often the predominant symptom of depression in the elderly. Older adults with depression are also more likely to show symptoms of anxiety or irritability. (helpguide.org)

Depression is not a normal part of aging, in fact most seniors, despite the challenges of growing old are satisfied with their lives.

"Loss is painful—whether a loss of independence, mobility, health, your long-time career, or someone you love. Grieving over losses is normal, even if the feelings of sadness last for weeks or months. Losing hope and joy, however is not normal. It's depression" (helpguide.org)

Baby Boomers are more prone to senior suicide than any other generation in recent history. One quarter of all suicides are committed by the elderly. Approximately every 83 minutes, one senior adult, 65 years of age or older commits elderly suicide in the United States. (Nutrition Health Center)

## Young at heart

Written by Erin LeBlanc

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Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States and very common among older adults (about.com)

Rural Solutions in collaboration with the Senior Service Coordinator is providing a free gatekeeper training for individuals in Phillips County, to look for signs of depression in yourself or a loved one, which may manifest into something deeper and what to do if approached by a person contemplating suicide.

The training will be held Wednesday, Feb. 16 at Haxtun Community Center from 1–2 p.m and Monday, Feb. 21 at SunSet Community Center in Holyoke from 5:30–6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend and refreshments will be provided.

For further information, contact Maranda Miller of Rural Solutions at 970-526-3616 or myself.

As always, if you are not sure about symptoms or possible warning signs or have questions about your health, please consult with your physician.

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