

The emotional aspect of aged care: Supporting mental well-being in older adults.

Lank Rusulle*

Centre for Economics and Policy in Health, Institute of Medical and Social Care Research, Bangor University, Gwynedd, UK

Abstract

As the global population continues to age, it is essential to address the emotional aspect of aged care and prioritize the mental well-being of older adults. While physical health is often the primary concern in elder care, neglecting the emotional needs of older adults can have detrimental effects on their overall well-being. This article explores the emotional challenges faced by older adults and discusses strategies to support their mental health in aged care settings. It highlights the importance of social connections, combating loneliness, providing emotional support and companionship, acknowledging and validating their experiences, and offering access to mental health services. The article emphasizes the link between physical and emotional well-being and encourages the promotion of physical health in aged care. By recognizing and supporting the emotional aspect of aged care, we can enhance the quality of life for older adults, ensuring they experience their golden years with dignity, purpose, and emotional well-being.

Keywords: Physical health, Aging, Mental health.

Introduction

As societies around the world continue to grapple with the challenges of an aging population, it becomes increasingly important to address the emotional aspect of aged care and prioritize the mental well-being of older adults. While physical health is often the primary concern in elder care, neglecting the emotional needs of older adults can have detrimental effects on their overall well-being [1]. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize and support the emotional aspect of aged care to ensure the mental health of older adults is nurtured and preserved.

Aging is a natural process that brings about a multitude of changes, both physically and emotionally. Older adults may experience loss, grief, loneliness, and a decline in their social networks, which can significantly impact their mental well-being. Many older adults face challenges such as the loss of loved ones, retirement, health issues, and a sense of purposelessness. These emotional stressors can lead to depression, anxiety, and a diminished quality of life if not addressed adequately [2]. One of the fundamental ways to support the emotional well-being of older adults in aged care is by promoting social connections and combating loneliness. Loneliness and social isolation are prevalent issues among older adults, particularly those living in long-term care facilities or those who have limited contact with family and friends. Encouraging social interaction through

group activities, community programs, and intergenerational initiatives can help foster a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation.

Additionally, providing emotional support and companionship to older adults is essential. This can be achieved through regular one-on-one interactions, where caregivers or volunteers engage in meaningful conversations, actively listen to their concerns, and offer empathetic support. Simple gestures like holding a hand, sharing a heartfelt conversation, or engaging in activities of interest can significantly contribute to an older adult's emotional well-being. Furthermore, it is vital to acknowledge and validate the emotional experiences of older adults. Many older adults have lived through significant historical events, personal milestones, and life-changing experiences. Their stories and perspectives hold immense value and should be respected and appreciated. Creating opportunities for older adults to share their life stories and experiences can not only boost their self-esteem but also foster a sense of purpose and fulfillment [3].

In addition to social support, access to mental health services is crucial in aged care. Older adults should have access to mental health professionals who are trained in geriatric care. These professionals can provide counseling, therapy, and other evidence-based interventions to address mental health issues effectively. Regular mental health assessments can help identify and treat conditions such as depression, anxiety,

*Correspondence to: Lank Rusulle, Centre for Economics and Policy in Health, Institute of Medical and Social Care Research, Bangor University, Dean Street, Gwynedd, UK., Email: rusulle.lank@bangor.ac.uk

Received: 02-May-2023, Manuscript No. AAAGP-23-99114; Editor assigned: 04-May-2023, PreQC No. AAAGP-23-99114 (PQ); Reviewed: 18-May-2023, QC No. AAAGP-23-99114; Revised: 20-May-2023, Manuscript No. AAAGP-23-99114 (R); Published: 26-May-2023, DOI: [10.35841/aaagp-7.3.147](https://doi.org/10.35841/aaagp-7.3.147)

Citation: Rusulle L. The emotional aspect of aged care: supporting mental well-being in older adults. *J Age Geriat Psych*. 2023;7(3):1-7

or cognitive decline at an early stage. Moreover, promoting physical well-being is closely linked to emotional well-being in older adults. Regular exercise, a healthy diet, and adequate sleep can have a positive impact on mental health. Encouraging physical activity tailored to the capabilities of older adults, providing nutritious meals, and ensuring a comfortable and peaceful environment for rest and sleep are essential components of aged care [4, 5].

Conclusion

The emotional aspect of aged care plays a critical role in supporting the mental well-being of older adults. Recognizing the emotional challenges faced by older adults and addressing them through social support, access to mental health services, validation of experiences, and promoting physical well-being can significantly enhance their overall quality of life. By prioritizing the emotional needs of older adults, we can create a society that values and cares for its senior members, ensuring that they enjoy their golden years with dignity, purpose, and emotional well-being.

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