



## **MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS OF SENIORS**

The term “seniors” has come to describe a broad category of individuals, each with their own particular psychological make-up. However, there are some aspects of mental health which tend to apply to seniors more than other age groups.

- **HEALTH** is a primary concern for many seniors. Inadequate care and information can cause worries about health, unrealistic expectations of physical abilities and emotional problems for seniors. It is very difficult to accept the physical changes and vulnerabilities that aging brings, but fighting these changes can bring added stress. Emotional well-being comes from accepting and even “rising above” the changes brought on by aging.
- **SEXUALITY** is another area where seniors may have to accept changes in their capacities. Here again, it is important to have accurate information and realistic expectations. Contrary to what the media portrays, you do not have to be young to be sexy. There is no reason why seniors must give up a satisfying sex life.
- **SELF-IDENTITY** may be questioned as aging and retirement take place. Activities such as working or raising children, which once gave status and self-esteem, need to be replaced with other activities and opportunities for self-expression.
- **INDEPENDENCE** and **DEPENDENCE** may surface as issues in the later years. People who have been used to taking care of themselves and their families may have difficulties adjusting to others taking care of them.
- **LOSS** of health and physical ability, status and income, friends and family members can be brought about in aging. Seniors need to let themselves grieve adequately in order to accept and cope with these losses.
- **ISOLATION** can cause depression. Getting involved in group and community activities, talking things over with friends, and getting physical exercise are all ways that seniors have found to lift their spirits.

However, if depression or other emotional problems interfere with day-to-day functioning, professional counseling can assist in developing effective solutions.

*Family Service Counseling and Community Resource Center is only a call away. Fees are based upon an adjusted scale according to income and family size.*