



# understand grief and depression

Loss, grief and recovery are words that have many meanings to numerous individuals. Loss can occur in different forms, whether it is losing a loved one, a career or one's self-worth. Regardless of the source, a common and natural personal response to loss is grief. Grief can be exhibited with both physical and behavioral responses, ranging from crying and appetite loss, to anger, anxiety and difficulty focusing.

Karen Briskie, director of THE MEDICAL TEAM's *Journey Behavioral Home Health Program*, says, "Grief is a natural process, an intense fundamental emotion, a universal experience which makes us human. Grief itself is a normal and natural response to loss. It is important to realize that acknowledging the grief promotes the healing process."

Grief should not be labeled as clinical depression and does not generally warrant the use of antidepressants as Page Moss Fletcher, MD, a Northern Virginia board-certified in geriatric psychiatry, adds, "A very important point is that grief and loss are a common human experience and can be helped with therapy. Clinical depression is a medical problem that is treatable with medication, therapy and support."

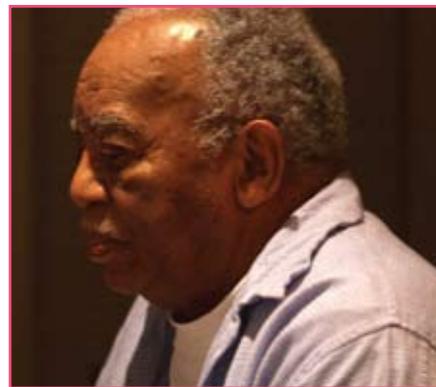
According to Dr. Fletcher, pursuing active treatment can help those with clinical depression or persistent grief get

back to enjoying life and minimize the risk of medical problems or in the worst case, suicide. "Untreated depression can lead to stroke, heart attack and other medical problems," he says. "Getting treated helps minimize the chances of other medical problems worsening."

Seniors today have many challenges to face as they begin to age and retire. There are many options for seniors when it comes to having less independence. Retiring from a longtime job, experiencing the passing of loved ones, or eventually losing their independence, seniors face difficult situations and many losses. The National Institute of Mental Health indicates that only about 10 percent of seniors suffering from depression receive treatment. Many seniors do not seek treatment or feel comfortable discussing depression and loss with their physicians. When depression is treated, numerous studies show that seniors respond very well. For example, a Pittsburgh Medical Center study found that 80 percent of seniors treated over a three-year period didn't suffer recurrent bouts.

Fortunately, there are programs that can provide solutions and treatment for a variety of behavioral health issues.

THE MEDICAL TEAM developed one such specialty program with a nationally-recognized expert on psychiatric home care. The company's *Journey Behavioral Home Health Program* is a



The **Journey Behavioral Home Health Program** is known for addressing the mental health and behavioral challenges associated with grief and loss, transitional trauma and depression.

program to which Dr. Fletcher regularly refers individuals in order to keep them living independently in their homes.

The unique research-based program is known for helping those who are becoming isolated in their homes and addressing the mental health and behavioral challenges associated with grief and loss, transitional trauma, depression, in addition to other behavioral health diagnoses.

No matter one's age, life does present unexpected challenges and individuals facing emotional and behavioral challenges are certainly not alone. Help from certified professionals and programs can provide treatment with solutions and play an instrumental role in improving lives. **GRL**

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