

THE PARNELL GROUP

RECOVERY SYSTEMS & SOLUTIONS

2016 NC MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE & AGING CONFERENCE

UNDERSTANDING, DETECTING & TREATING
SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS IN THE
ELDERLY

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SUD IN THE ELDERLY



- ▶ The Incidence of Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders in the over 60 population is often missed by health care providers.
- ▶ The symptoms of SUD's are often mistaken for other problems and conditions of the Elderly.
- ▶ It is believed that about 10% of this country's population abuses alcohol, but surveys revealed that as many as 17% of the over-65 adults have an alcohol-abuse problem

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

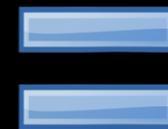
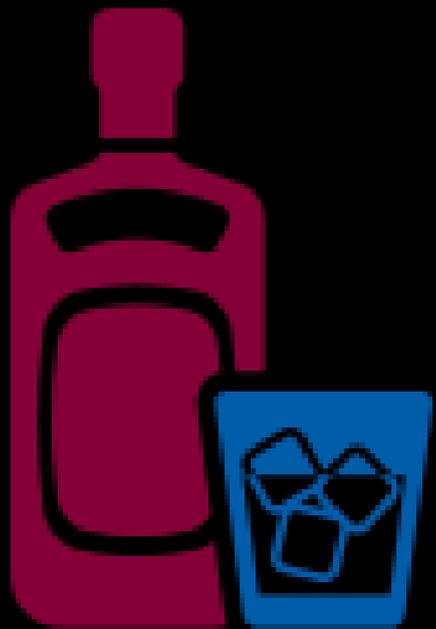


- ▶ Surveys have shown that 21% of older hospital patients had alcohol-related problems.
- ▶ Elderly alcohol abusers can be divided into two general types:
- ▶ The “Hardy Survivors” & The “Late Onset” Group
- ▶ Because alcohol has a higher absorption rate in the elderly, much like it does in women, the same amount of alcohol produces higher blood alcohol levels

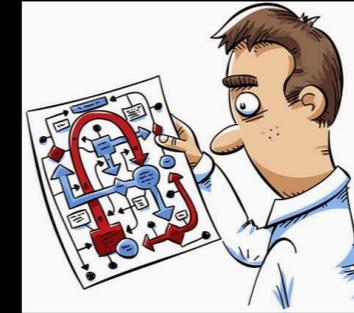
DOUBLE TROUBLE



- ▶ Alcohol abuse in this generation is complicated by the use of prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications.
- ▶ Combining medications and alcohol frequently result in significant adverse reactions.



FURTHER COMPLICATIONS



- ▶ Due to a reduction in blood flow to the liver and kidneys in the elderly...
- ▶ There can be as much as a 50% decrease in the rate of metabolism of some medications, especially benzodiazepines.
- ▶ The long half life of some of these drugs increases the incidence and severity of falls and fractures



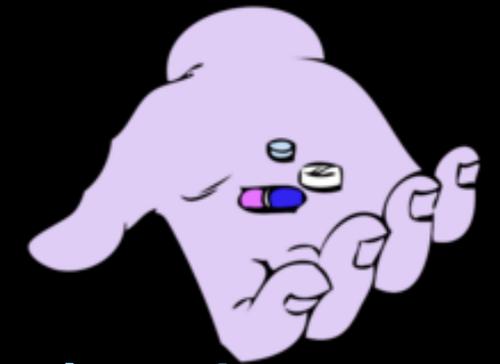
ACCIDENTAL DEATH



- ▶ The benzodiazepine user may become confused and take extra doses or other medications, causing overdose or death.



OTC MEDICATION USE



- ▶ Laxatives can cause chronic diarrhea, which can lead to sodium and potassium imbalance and cause heart rhythm irregularities.
- ▶ Antihistamines can cause confusion
- ▶ Cold medications can elevate the blood pressure and lead to strokes.
- ▶ Caffeine can cause anxiety and insomnia.



NICOTINE DEPENDENCE



- ▶ Use early in life sets the stage for morbidity and mortality from this addiction.
- ▶ Elderly smokers not only continue to impair their respiratory systems, but are also more apt to die from respiratory diseases.
- ▶ Nicotine replacement products work successfully in this group.



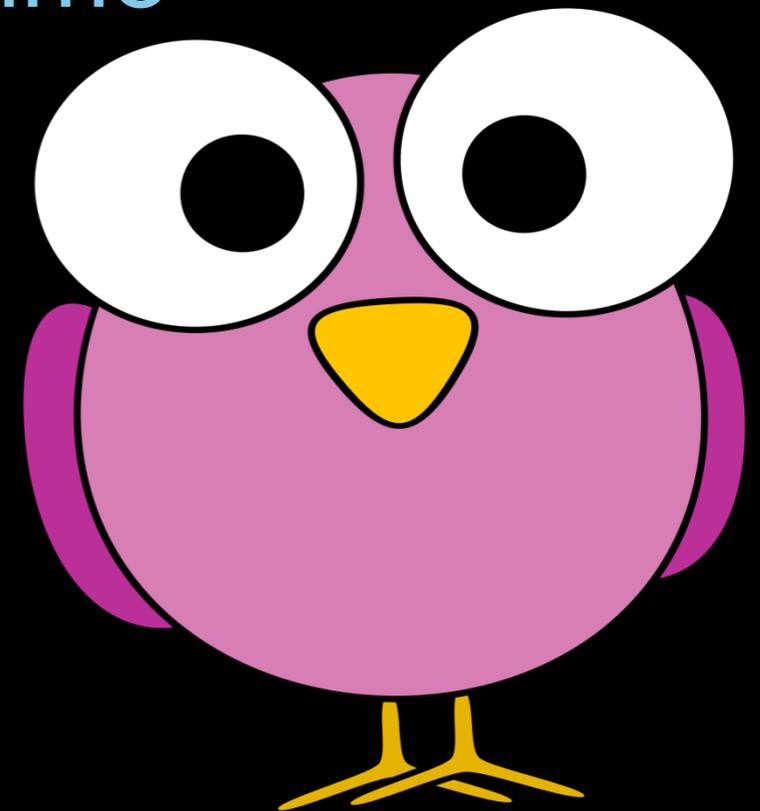
WHAT TO LOOK FOR?



- ▶ Memory trouble after having a drink or taking a medication
- ▶ Loss of coordination
- ▶ Changes in sleeping habits
- ▶ Unexplained bruises
- ▶ Being unsure of self
- ▶ Irritability, sadness, depression

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

- ▶ Unexplained chronic pain
- ▶ Changes in eating habits
- ▶ Wanting to stay alone much of the time
- ▶ Failing to bathe or keep clean
- ▶ Having trouble concentrating



ISOLATION IS A HALLMARK OF SUD

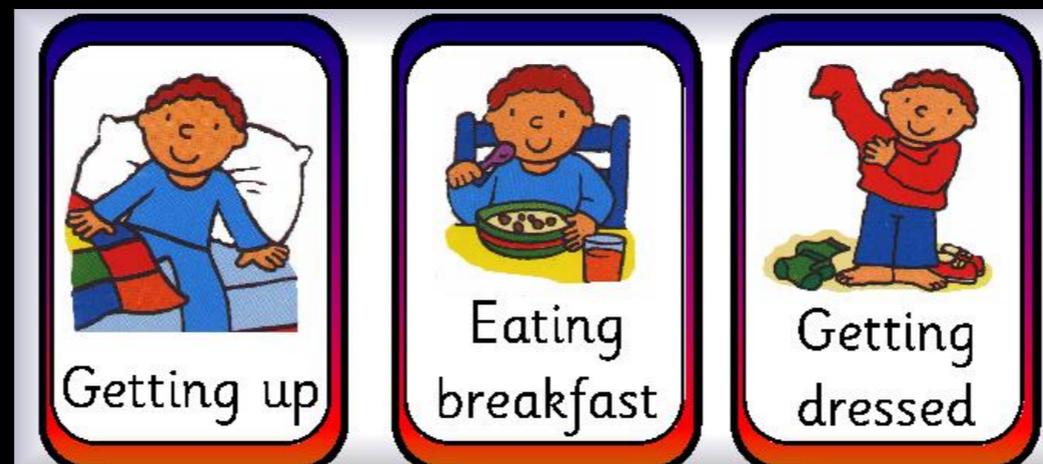
- ▶ Difficulty staying in touch with family or friends
- ▶ Lack of interest in usual activities





SCREENING & DIAGNOSIS

- ▶ Education for and from healthcare providers, family and pharmacies is paramount.
- ▶ Use of screening tools by clinicians
- ▶ A family's attention to the elderly family member's daily life can be very helpful



CONSIDER MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES



- ▶ About 8.9 million persons have co-occurring disorders; they have both a mental health and a substance use disorder.
- ▶ The relationship between the two is complex and the treatment is difficult.
- ▶ Psychiatrists & Addiction Specialists must work as a team to unravel and diagnose the problem and define the treatment.





HOW TO GET HELP



- ▶ First step in securing treatment is a thorough assessment by an Addiction Specialist.
- ▶ This step is necessary to determine the proper level of care.
- ▶ Outpatient vs. Inpatient.
- ▶ Crisis care and Long-Term Treatment.
- ▶ ROSC's emerging as best practice.



WHAT IS RECOVERY?



Recovery from alcohol and drug problems is a process of change through which an individual achieves abstinence and improved health, wellness, and quality of life.

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (2005). National Summit on Recovery: Conference Report.

DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 07-4276. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.



ROSC'S



Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC).
ROSC shifts the focus from getting people into treatment to supporting a lifetime process of recovery.



ELEMENTS OF A RECOVERY-ORIENTED SYSTEM OF CARE

- ▶ Person-centered
- ▶ Inclusive of family and other ally involvement
- ▶ Individualized and comprehensive services across the lifespan
- ▶ Systems anchored in the community

ELEMENTS OF A RECOVERY-ORIENTED SYSTEM OF CARE (CONTINUED 1)

- ▶ Continuity of Care
- ▶ Partnership-consultant relationships
- ▶ Strength-based
- ▶ Culturally responsive
- ▶ Responsiveness to personal belief systems

ELEMENTS OF A RECOVERY-ORIENTED SYSTEM OF CARE (CONTINUED 2)

- ▶ Commitment to peer recovery support services
- ▶ Inclusion of the voices and experiences of recovering individuals and their families
- ▶ Integrated services

ELEMENTS OF A RECOVERY-ORIENTED SYSTEM OF CARE (CONTINUED 3)

- ▶ System-wide education and training
- ▶ Ongoing monitoring and outreach
- ▶ Outcomes driven
- ▶ Research based
- ▶ Adequately and flexibly financed

SOURCES OF HELP

<http://drugabuse.com/usa/drug-abuse/north-carolina>

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/providers/lme-mco-directory>

<http://nationalsubstanceabuseindex.org/north-carolina/facilities.php>

http://interventionamerica.org/Inpatient_Rehab/Searchdirectory.cfm?State=NC

<http://www.addicted.org/north-carolina-long-term-drug-rehab.html>

REFERENCES

Hays, L. et al. Presented at a symposium for the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry 2002 Symposium: Substance Use Disorders in the Elderly: Prevalence, Special Considerations and Treatment

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series 26, Substance Abuse Among Older Adults* HHS Publication No. (SMA) 12-3918 First Printed 1998, Revised 2002, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2010, and 2012

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (2005). National Summit on Recovery: Conference Report. DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 07-4276. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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