S.I.L.V.E.R. FACTS

Issue 1

Americans are getting older and living longer and many are coping with chronic (ongoing) physical health conditions such as heart disease, respiratory disease, diabetes, high cholesterol, and arthritis. This is especially true for older adults with serious mental health conditions who often have one or more chronic physical health conditions.

Managing mental and physical health conditions at the same time can be challenging but there is research available on programs to help older adults manage both their mental and physical health conditions.

The goal of this *S.I.L.V.E.R. Facts* Issue Brief series is to describe research-based solutions to some of the challenges commonly encountered by older adults living with both mental and physical health conditions. *S.I.L.V.E.R. Facts* Issue Brief #1 reports on a program called Integrated Illness Management & Recovery (I-IMR).

Integrated Illness Management and Recovery (I-IMR)

Challenges Managing Chronic Physical and Serious Mental Health Conditions:

Challenges with managing chronic physical health conditions along with serious mental health conditions might include:

- finding medical providers
- navigating appointments
- managing treatment and prescriptions
- coping with mental health symptoms
- coping with physical health symptoms
- coping with stress
- exercising
- healthy eating
- avoiding hospitalizations
- focusing on mental health recovery and physical wellness

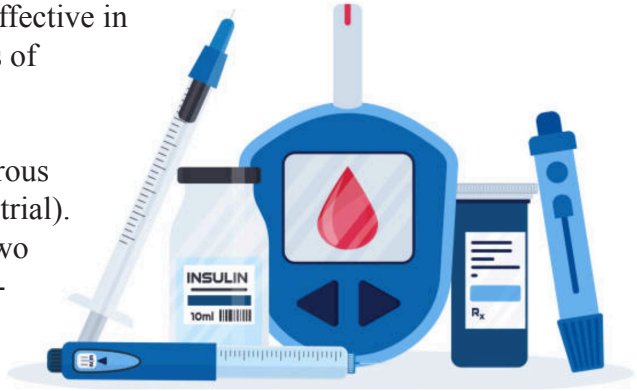
What is Integrated Illness Management and Recovery?

The I-IMR team provides education and training to support medication maintenance, symptom management, coping skills, and social skills.

I-IMR is intended for adults over 50 years old with both mental and physical health conditions.
People in I-IMR:

- attend weekly sessions with a trained I-IMR specialist and
- attend every other week sessions with a nurse or medical case manager
- I-IMR can be done either individually or in a group
- takes place over eight months (up to 45 sessions), usually at a community mental health center.

What is the evidence that Integrated Illness Management and Recovery works?



I-IMR is known as an "Evidence-Based Practice" that is effective in helping older adults and their families meet the challenges of managing both mental and physical health conditions.

Some of the evidence for I-IMR is based on the most rigorous research design scientists use (i.e., randomized controlled trial). Researchers surveyed older adults and their providers at two community mental health centers. They collected information before and after trying I-IMR and compared their responses to a group that did not receive I-IMR. They found significant improvement in mental and physical self-management, social skills, and independent living in the I-IMR group, but not in the group without I-IMR. The I-IMR group also had fewer psychiatric or medical hospitalizations than the other group.

Where can I get Integrated Illness Management and Recovery?

Talk to your mental health services provider and ask about availability or contact a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center in your area. These Centers can be found using the locator at this website: *https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/program/ccbhc-success-center/ccbhc-locator/*

Where can I read more about Integrated Illness Management and Recovery?

Download the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Report: *https://store.samhsa.gov/product/psychosocial-interventions-older-adults-serious-mental-illness/pep21-06-05-001*

Or visit our website: Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Aging Among Adults with Serious Mental Illnesses: Supporting Individuals to Live As Vibrant Elders in Recovery (RRTC – S.I.L.V.E.R.): *https://cpr.bu.edu/silver/*

References

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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Psychosocial Interventions for Older Adults With Serious Mental Illness. SAMHSA Publication No. PEP21-06-05-001. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2021.

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