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

Issue 2

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 while coping with aging can challenge independence. This SILVER FACTS Issue Brief reports on a program called "Helping Older People Experience Success," or HOPES.

The **Helping Older People Experience Success (HOPES)** program is designed to improve functioning and independence of older adults with serious mental health conditions by teaching social, community living, and healthy living skills.

Helping Older People Experience Success (HOPES)

Why is the HOPES program needed?

Challenges for older adults managing chronic physical and mental health conditions might include:

- Self-care
- Meal preparation
- Using transportation and community navigation
- Medication management
- Managing finances
- Physical activity
- Maintaining friendships and social connections
- Employment or volunteering
- Making and keeping medical appointments
- Coordination of primary health care visits
- Preventive health screening
- Advance care planning

What is the Helping Older People Experience Success program?

HOPES is intended for adults over 50 years old who are living in the community (that is, not in a nursing home or other facility) and receiving mental health services.

HOPES is a two year program. The first year consists of 2.5 hour-long weekly group sessions with a trained HOPES specialist, usually at a community mental health center. The second year consists of monthly refresher sessions.

Twice a month participants go into the community to practice social skills in a variety of settings. Participants also have monthly individual meetings with a registered nurse for health management, including the coordination of preventive care.

HOPES can also be delivered to individuals rather than groups in a version called HOPES-Individual or HOPES-I.

The HOPES program provides training on social skills, independent living skills, and skills required to navigate the health care system.

What skills are taught in the HOPES program?

The HOPES sessions cover 50 skills, broken into 7 modules:

- Communicating effectively
- Making and keeping friends
- Making the most of leisure time
- Healthy living
- Using medications effectively
- Making the most of a healthcare visit
- Living independently in the community

What is the evidence that Helping Older People Experience Success works?

HOPES is known as an "Evidence-Based Practice" that is effective in helping older adults and their families meet the challenges of independent living.

Some of the evidence is based on the findings of a study which compared the outcomes of individuals participating in HOPES to those not in HOPES. The study found that HOPES participants showed greater improvement in social skills, community functioning, self-efficacy (believing you can accomplish a task or goal), and engagement in leisure activities. HOPES participants also showed a reduction of some psychiatric symptoms.

Other support for the HOPES program comes from a study that looked at long-term outcomes, up to three years after participants completed the program. Compared to those who were not in the program, HOPES participants demonstrated greater community functioning, independent living skills, self-efficacy and reduced psychiatric symptoms. HOPES participants had fewer hospitalizations and emergency room visits and greater engagement in preventative care and planning.

Where can I find a Helping Older People Experience Success program?

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 Helping Older People Experience Success (HOPES)?

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.) at: https://cpr.bu.edu/silver/

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