

Mental health care in your golden years

SOT

Dr. Ari Lakritz [AR-ee // LACK-ritz], OSF HealthCare clinical psychologist

“As individuals grow older, they start to prioritize their emotional needs over their professional, financial or more mundane needs. So you may be surprised when you work with an individual who’s older at how quickly they want to work on the problems in their life and how solution-focused they are as compared to their younger cohorts.” (:23)

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“That is really what older adults have on their mind at this stage of their life. Many of them are retired. For many of them, financial issues or their professional climbing of the ladder have kind of taken a backseat. They are focused on their remaining relationships and making them as good as possible.” (:25)

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“On the plus side, I think everyone saw and was pleasantly surprised at how quickly older adults managed to understand technology. [They] understand remote meetings and how to participate almost as fast as younger adults who also had to adjust very quickly. That was a big game changer in the field that is not going away anytime soon.” (:30)

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“It’s very much emphasized, even in old age, to continue to pick up new skills. To acquire new knowledge. That does lead to a great deal of self-esteem. And cognitive stimulation, learning new things, reasoning and being intellectually challenged are some of the biggest protective factors against dementia.” (:19)

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“Many people have this misconception that working with older adults is something that is fundamentally different than working with younger people. [Many think] you need specific, specialized training or you need to be an older adult yourself to work with older adults. And that serves as a barrier to older adults’ treatment.” (:24)

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“If you’re a trusted person in that older adult’s life, and they trust you with more mundane concerns such as helping them get around the house and giving them rides, then, I think there’s a good chance they would trust you if you said, ‘I see you’re dealing with this. You’ve been dealing with it for a very long time. You haven’t been able to talk with anyone about it. There is someone we can go to.’” (:31)