Armstrong Indiana Behavioral Health
Senior Care Task Force

Behavioral Health Resource Guide for Seniors in Armstrong County

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Introduction

Dear Senior, Family Member, Care Giver or Concerned Citizen,

The Armstrong-Indiana Behavioral Health Senior Care Task Force is a specialized, solutions focused group that was formed to better understand the behavioral health needs of our county residents. We want to ensure that seniors, family members, and care givers in our communities have the behavioral health services and supports that you need.

This county specific resource guide was created with you in mind and includes information about common mental health topics impacting seniors; a section on how to access services; brief descriptions on the types of services in Armstrong County and phone numbers to get you in touch with the resources you need.

If you feel you are in need of emergent mental health services, we encourage you to contact our local 24 hour 7 days a week crisis services line at 1-877-333-2470. The crisis line has trained professionals that can talk with you over the phone, or meet with you in person. You can also call 911 or go to nearest emergency room!

Good mental health is essential to your overall health and well-being. It is our hope that this resource guide will help you to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,
The Armstrong-Indiana Behavioral Health Senior Care Task Force

Mental Health and Older Adults

Many older adults are at risk for developing mental health conditions. This guide reviews the signs, symptoms, and risk factors of some common mental health issues including anxiety, bipolar, depression, suicide, and dementia.

Seeking Help

If you think that you or a loved one may suffer from mental illness, it is very important to seek treatment:

- Reach out to a trusted friend or family member for help
- Contact your primary care physician to discuss your concerns
- Schedule to see an outpatient mental health provider

If you need immediate help, or you are thinking about harming yourself or others:

- Call Armstrong-Indiana Crisis hotline at 1-877-333-2470 or text 1-877-565-7744
- Call 911 for emergency services
- Go to the nearest Emergency Department

Treatment

For most mental health conditions, the earlier that treatment begins, the more effective it is. The right treatment can help to improve your overall health and quality of life and may include:

- Psychotherapy to teach new ways of thinking and behaving

- Prescription medications

Beyond Treatment

There are many other things that may help you or a loved one:

- Join a support group
- Stay active and exercise, eat healthy foods, and get enough sleep
- Avoid using drugs and alcohol
- Spend time with other people
- Set realistic goals for yourself and ask for help

ANXIETY

Occasional anxiety is a normal part of life, but anxiety disorders are illnesses that cause people to be frightened, distressed, or uneasy for no apparent reason. These symptoms may interfere with daily life. There are several different types of anxiety disorders including *generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder.*

Signs and symptoms

If you have been experiencing some of the following symptoms more days than not, you may be suffering from anxiety:

- Chronic, exaggerated worry or fear about everyday life events, activities, and situations
- Always anticipating the worst outcome
- Feeling restless, wound-up, or on edge
- Difficulty concentrating, having your mind go blank

- Sleep problems, difficulty falling asleep, not feeling rested
- Fear of social situations, being judged by others (social anxiety)
- Extreme, disabling, irrational fear of something (phobia)
- Sudden, intense feelings of terror (panic disorder)
- Repeated, intrusive, and unwanted thoughts or rituals that seem impossible to control (obsessive-compulsive disorder)
- May be accompanied by physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, muscle tension, nausea, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, and dizziness

Risk Factors

Current research suggests that anxiety is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. The following factors may increase your risk:

- Personal or family history of anxiety or other mental disorders
- Shyness or behavioral inhibition in childhood
- Exposure to stressful life events in childhood and adulthood
- Being female, being divorced or widowed, having few economic resources

DEPRESSION

Depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the United States. Clinical depression is a medical condition that causes severe symptoms

and affects how you feel, think, and manage daily activities. These symptoms do not go away with time and may interfere with your daily life. Depression can begin at any age and is never a normal part of aging.

Signs and Symptoms

If you have been experiencing some of the following symptoms most of the day, nearly every day, you may be suffering from depression:

- Persistent sad or "empty" mood
- Feeling worthless, hopeless, helpless, discouraged, or pessimistic
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy and fatigue
- Irritability, restlessness
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Aches and pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive issues without a known cause that do not ease with treatment

Risk Factors

Current research suggests that depression is caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors. The following factors may increase your risk:

- Personal or family history of depression

- Stress and major life changes including loss, trauma, and abuse
- Certain physical illnesses, chronic conditions, and some medications
- Having a disability
- Loneliness and social isolation
- Misuse of drugs and alcohol

BIPOLAR DISORDER

Bipolar disorder is characterized by extreme highs and lows in mood and energy. High moods are called mania and low moods are called depression. Bipolar disorder does not mean that someone is highly emotional; it refers to extended periods of mood that are excessively high alternating with excessively low, with periods or normal mood in between. While everyone has ups and downs, the severe shifts that occur with bipolar disorder can have a serious impact on a person's life.

Signs and Symptoms

If you have been experiencing episodes of some of the following symptoms nearly every day for at least 1 week, you may be suffering from bipolar disorder:

Mania:

- Feeling very elated or euphoric, increased energy and activity
- Racing thoughts and rapid talking
- Easily irritated, agitated, or distracted
- Uncharacteristically poor judgment, engaging in risky behaviors

- Decreased need for sleep, trouble falling asleep or staying asleep

Depression:

- Feeling very sad, down, or empty
- Feeling guilty, hopeless, or worthless
- Decreased energy and activity levels
- Irritability or restlessness
- Difficulty concentrating or forgetful

Risk Factors

Current research suggests that bipolar disorder may be caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors:

- Personal or family history of bipolar or other mental disorder
- Exposure to distressing life events

SUICIDE AND THE ELDERLY

Older adults are the fastest growing segment of the population and are also at the highest risk of suicide. Elderly men are at higher risk than the general population with white men over the age of 85 being more likely to complete suicide than any other group.

Warning Signs

It is crucial that friends and family of older adults identify the warning signs of suicide and take action. Some common warning signs include:

- Feeling worthless, hopeless, helpless, pessimistic

- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased social interaction, withdrawing from friends and family
- Loss of interest in personal hygiene and grooming
- Breaking medical regimens (not taking meds, canceling appts)
- Getting affairs in order (updating will, giving things away)
- Stockpiling medications or obtaining other lethal means
- Refusing to eat, drink, or take medications
- Preoccupation with death, lack of concern about personal safety
- Statements like “I wish I was dead” or “You would be better off without me”
- Expression of suicidal intent, suicide attempts

Risk Factors

The reasons why older adults are at higher risk of suicide are complex and suicide is rarely preceded by only one cause or reason. Common risk factors include:

- Depression or other mental illness
- Family discord or recent loss of a loved one
- Physical illness, disability, chronic pain, fear of a prolonged illness
- Loneliness and social isolation, major changes in social roles
- Increased dependence on caregivers, fear of becoming a burden

- Loss of control, decreased abilities (mobility, driving, etc.)

DEMENTIA

Dementia is a general term that describes a range of symptoms associated with a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with daily life. Dementia causes serious impairment in memory, language, attention, reasoning, and visual perception and leads to changes in thinking, behavior, and emotion. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia.

Signs and Symptoms

While symptoms of dementia can vary greatly, individuals may experience:

- Forgetfulness, trouble learning new things
- Inability to focus and pay attention
- Difficulty completing complex tasks
- Getting lost in familiar environments
- Difficulty communicating and finding words
- Impaired reasoning and judgement, poor decision making
- Difficult with planning, organizing, and problem solving
- Confusion and disorientation
- Hallucinations, delusions
- Personality and behavior changes including irritability, agitation, or aggression

Risk Factors

Current research suggests that dementia may be caused by a combination of genetic,

environmental, and lifestyle factors. The following factors may increase your risk:

- Age
- Family history of dementia
- Cardiovascular factors (blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar)
- History of heart attack or stroke
- Traumatic brain injury, concussions
- Drug, alcohol, and tobacco use
- Sleep apnea
- Down Syndrome

DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS

Older adults with mental illness or dementia may exhibit concerning behaviors including agitation, suspiciousness, refusing care, wandering, and other behaviors. Behaviors may be very distressing because of disruption to others and risk of harm. Effectively managing behaviors can improve quality of life, reduce caregiver stress, and help to keep your loved one at home.

Identify the Cause of Behaviors

Behaviors are often a form of communication about unmet needs and may be a reaction to external stress. Many factors can trigger behaviors:

- Underlying medical conditions or medication side effects
- Physical discomfort like pain, being hot/cold, hungry, or tired
- Impaired vision or hearing
- Changes in environment, caregiver, or routine
- Overstimulation from environment

- Activities that are too complicated
- Lack of stimulation, boredom, nothing productive to do
- Loss of control, feeling powerless, not having choices
- Fear and confusion, disorientation
- Lack of exercise and physical activity
- Communication issues

Remove Stressors and Triggers

Some general ways to reduce common triggers of behavior:

- Ensure a thorough medical evaluation to rule out physical causes
- Create a calm, quiet, comforting environment
- Maintain a consistent routine and familiar caregivers
- Monitor personal comfort by checking for pain, hunger/thirst, toileting needs, etc.
- Give some control over choices whenever possible
- Repeat, remind, and re-orient to reduce fear and confusion
- Provide enjoyable activities and daily exercise
- Allow adequate rest between stimulating events or activities

Employ Strategies to Manage Behaviors

If possible, triggers have been removed or reduced and the behavior is still present, there are strategies that may help to manage behaviors. Not every technique will work every time so try more than one:

- Distract and redirect through reminiscing, singing, art, changing location, getting a snack, or bringing in another person or pet
- Reduce environmental stimulus by turning off the TV, dimming lights, or moving to a quieter area
- Provide comforting things for the individual like a blanket, sweater, or stuffed animal
- Help them to relax with warm milk, soothing music, massage, aromatherapy, brushing their hair, etc.
- Change how or when care is provided, some care can be postponed until later, or have someone else offer care
- Engage them in a meaningful activity or hobby, go for a walk, take a ride in the car, or work on a household chore

Be Aware

The personality and demeanor of the caregiver can significantly affect the behaviors of the individual. It is important to be aware of personal thoughts and actions that may affect others:

- Be calm, pleasant, gentle, and respectful
- Use positive statements and avoid saying "no" when possible
- Ask permission to provide care: "May I help you?"
- Don't forget to apologize: "I'm sorry I upset you."
- Practice effective communication and active listening
- Be aware of body language

- ♦ Maintain a sense of humor, be flexible, and "go with the flow"
- ♦ Don't try to reason, argue, scold, reprimand, or shame them
- ♦ Don't take their behavior personally and don't be offended
- ♦ Know that they aren't intentionally making you angry or upset
- ♦ Remember that the person has a disease and behaviors are a way to communicate that they are afraid, uncomfortable, or confused

How to Obtain Mental Health Treatment

For those who are seeking mental health treatment, there are several ways to get started:

- Call your primary physician to discuss treatment options or request a referral for a mental health specialist.
- Contact your county Base Service Unit (BSU) for assessment and referral for various mental health services. In Armstrong County the BSU is Family Counseling Center (contact information on pg 16).
- Call an outpatient mental health provider to schedule an evaluation.
- Contact your insurance company for a list of mental health providers who accept your insurance.

For individuals experiencing a crisis or mental health emergency:

- Call the Armstrong-Indiana Crisis Hotline at 1-877-333-2470.
- Text the Armstrong-Indiana Crisis Hotline at 1-877-565-7744
- Go to the nearest Emergency Department.
- Call 911.

Types of Treatment

There are many different treatment options available and individuals can choose what treatment, or combination of treatments, they receive. There is no single treatment that works for every condition or every person. However, pairing medication *and* therapy is often the most effective treatment. This resource guide provides information regarding local services such as:

- Medication management
- Individual and group therapy
- Case management
- Peer support services
- Self-help and support groups

Outpatient

Family Counseling Center offers a number of diagnostic and assessment services designed to identify treatment options both within the Center and in the community. Individuals should contact the Base Service Unit with their questions or to schedule an appointment.
300 South Jefferson Street Kittanning, PA 16201
724-543-2941

Family Psychological Associates provides mental health services and treatment for geriatrics and their families. Their treatment goals focus on: self-reliance and growth, recovery and inclusion in the community, access to appropriate services and supports, a quality of life that includes family and friends.
365 Franklin Hill Road Kittanning, PA 16201
724-543-1888

Inspiring Change
204 Butler Road, Suite 2
Kittanning, PA 16201
724-256-9881
All kinds of therapy for all kinds of people.
Counseling, medication management and evaluations.
www.inspiringchange.life

APM
Telehealth services for Spanish speaking individuals that are in need of behavioral and addiction health care. Services provided via telehealth: mental health evaluations, medication management for mental health and addiction, therapy, recovery support and relapse prevention.
267-296-7223
info@apmphila.org

PERSAD CENTER
Specialized and licensed therapists provide culturally competent, trauma-informed mental health care, including therapy for: individuals,

couples & families; drug and alcohol counseling; HIV/AIDS counseling and other services; peer support groups, such as aging and transgender support groups; psychiatric evaluations; and medication management. *TELEHEALTH APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE*
5301 Butler St. Pittsburgh, PA 15201
59 E. Strawberry Ave. Washington, PA 15301
412-441-9786.
www.persadcenter.org/register

Legacy Wellness Solutions
144 North Jefferson Street
Kittanning PA 16201
Office: 724-300-3037 Fax: 724-571-4899
In person and virtual mental health outpatient.
www.wwlws.com

Crisis Provider

The Open Door Provides 24/7 Crisis Hotline services to Armstrong and Indiana Counties.
Walk in services available Monday - Friday 8AM-4PM in Armstrong County at
120 South Grant Avenue, Suite 1, Kittanning, PA 16201
Phone: 1-877-333-2470
Text: 1-877-565-7744
Walk in services 7 days a week 8:00am to 8:00pm at IRMC (in same building as IRMC UrgiCare)
875 Hospital Road, Indiana, PA 15701
Website: www.theopendoor.org

Inpatient

ACMH
Adult acute inpatient behavioral health unit in which a multidisciplinary team provides care to individuals with behavioral health diagnoses in a safe, structured environment.
One Nolte Drive Kittanning, PA 16201
724-543-8500
www.acmh.org

Mountains Behavioral Health at IRMC
Inpatient care in a secure setting on 3 different units for adolescents ages 14-18, adults ages 18-59 and geriatric patients ages 60 and older who may be experiencing acute psychiatric symptoms.
145 IRMC Drive, Indiana, PA 15701
724-357-7404
www.irmc.org

Drug & Alcohol

The **Armstrong-Indiana-Clarion Drug and Alcohol Commission** is the designated Single County Authority (SCA) for drug and alcohol services in Armstrong, Indiana, and Clarion counties in the state of Pennsylvania. The commission targets four core drug and alcohol service areas: Prevention, Intervention, Treatment, Case management. For more information on drug & alcohol services in Armstrong County please call the Kittanning office at 724-545-1614 or the Main/Administrative office at 724-354-2746.

Mental Health supportive services including drop in services

Certified Peer Specialist Providers

Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) is an individual with lived mental health experience who has been trained and certified on how to assist others in recovery and wellness. A CPS works one-on-one with individuals in recovery to provide advocacy, goal development, identification of community resources, education on maintaining wellness and recovery, and education on navigating the mental health system.

PeerStar, LLC
14 College Park Plaza, Johnstown, PA 15904
814-515-2699
www.peerstarllc.com

Unity Family Services
118 Market Street, Kittanning, PA 16201
(724) 845-2978
1-866-771-4488
www.ufsmentalhealth.com

Family Counseling Center of Armstrong County
300 South Jefferson Street Kittanning, PA 16201
724-548-5126
www.fccac.org

Mental Health Drop-In Centers

A mental health Drop-In Center is a place for self-help, advocacy, education and socialization. Drop-

In centers provide individuals in recovery from mental illness with the opportunity for socialization, support, training and education, activities and crafts, a daily meal, and advocacy. The centers are free to attend or join. For more information, hours of operation, or a schedule of activities, call the Drop-In Center listed below.

Kittanning Empowerment Center
113 Market Street, Kittanning PA 16201
(724)543-2063
KEC@anrinfo.org

Support Groups

For individuals, families, and caregivers.

Grief Share
Grief Share is a friendly, caring group of people who will work alongside you through life's most difficult experiences. You don't have to go through the grieving process alone. Visit griefshare.org for more information. 6:30 pm Tuesdays
To register go to the website or call 724-548-5643
https://www.harvestpa.org

Alzheimer's Association
Alzheimer's and Dementia information, resources, help and support. Search for support groups in your area.
24/7 Helpline: 1-800-272-3900
https://www.alz.org

Stroke Support Group
Providing education, encouragement and hope to stroke survivors, their families and caregivers.
Every Tuesday at 10:00am
ACMH, Conference Room 2 (behind cafeteria)
1 Nolte Drive, Kittanning, PA 16201
RSVP or get more info: 724-543-8453

Suicide Bereavement Support
Clarvida
Every 3rd Tuesday 6:30pm to 8:00pm
1222 Wayne Avenue, Indiana, PA 15701
For more info call 724-762-3510 or email chelsey.baroni@clarvida.com

Suicide Prevention Task Force of Armstrong County *begins 1/13/27*
Every 2nd Wednesday 7:00pm to 8:00 pm
Manor Township Municipal Building, 360 Byron Street, McGrann, PA 16236
For more info email hibners@acmh.org

Parkinson's Support Group
2nd Tuesday of each month at 3:00pm
Richard G Snyder YMCA
1150 N. Water St, Kittanning, PA 15701
For more info call: Dawn Kromer 724-954-7453

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
Free education and support group for grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren. Located in Westmoreland County.
For more info call:
Sherri Clay-Higgins: 724-797-3799
Kathy Ferlin: 724-875-8301
grannieskinship@gmail.com

Substance Abuse Recovery Meetings
Support groups for individuals, family, and friends in recovery from drugs and alcohol (includes AA, NA, Nar-Anon, ALANON, etc.)
Meeting times and locations vary
Contact Arc Manor at 724-548-7607

Senior Care Programs

Area Agency on Aging
The Armstrong County Area Agency on Aging provides programs and services for Armstrong County residents primarily age 60 and over.
The Agency helps provide information and services to help seniors remain active and independent in the community. Call the office for information on services offered and to determine eligibility.
120 S. Grant Avenue, Suite 3, Kittanning, PA 16201
Office: 724-548-3290
Toll-Free: 1-800-368-1066
https://www.co.armstrong.pa.us/index.php/county-government-m/area-agency-on-aging-m

LIFE Armstrong County
The LIFE program allows eligible seniors to live safely in their homes with access to the medical, social and rehabilitation services they need. All services provided, or arranged, by LIFE are fully covered when approved by our health team. Services can include: primary medical care, physical and occupational therapies, recreational therapy, home health care, social work services, etc…
Eligibility & Enrollment: Joining LIFE is a four step

process. This includes an Intake, Assessment, Determination of Medical and Financial Eligibility and Enrollment.
115 Nolte Drive Ext., Kittanning, PA 16201
724-545-8000
Intake Coordinator: 724-545-8028
https://lifeviecare.org/community/armstrong/

Overview on insurance

APPRISE Insurance Assistance Program - State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) APPRISE is Pennsylvania's State FREE Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). The Pennsylvania Department of Aging created APPRISE to help Pennsylvania residents understand their Medicare and other health insurance benefits, and assist citizens in making informed decisions about their health care options. APPRISE works individually and confidentially with clients to determine their individual health care needs and preferences, compare health insurance options, plan ahead for long term living, and obtain Medicare and supplemental coverage that fits their lifestyle and their budget.

OUR APPRISE COUNSELORS CAN HELP YOU:
UNDERSTAND

- MEDICARE BENEFITS
- MEDICARE PRESCRIPTIONS
- CHOICES ABOUT MEDICARE COVERAGE OPTIONS
- FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- BENEFITS UNDER LONG TERM CARE POLICIES
- PROVIDING PRESENTATIONS TO YOUR GROUP OR ORGANIZATION

Toll-free APPRISE Helpline is 1-800-783-7067, all services are free and confidential.
Community Health Choices is a new Medicaid (medical assistance) **managed care program for eligible people covered by both Medicare and Medicaid. The program started in January 2018 for the southwest region of Pennsylvania. Community Healthcare Choices (CHC)** participants who receive both Medicare and Medicaid. The key goal of CHC is to improve coordination between Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare will continue to be the primary payor for any service covered by Medicare. Provider will continue to bill Medicare for eligible services prior to billing Medicaid.
For those enrolled in CHC, your ACCESS card will be replaced. It will be a medical card from one of three plans you choose. The three managed care plans available are:
AmeriHealth Caritas 1-855-235-5115
PA Health and Wellness 1-844-626-6813
UPMC Community Health Choices 1-844-833-0523
Behavioral Health Plan under Medicaid
Your behavioral health plan will not change. Those currently with Carelon will retain their Carelon coverage with no changes in benefits. To further assist, Carelon will also provide enhanced services for seniors and enhanced care management for those individuals on long-term care waiver. Carelon

has telephone services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Credits: Carelon Behavioral Health
HEALTHCHOICES.PA.GOV
Southwestern PA Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
Family Services of Western Pensylvania

Online Resources

Online Resources for Consumers and Families

Many sites offer free information about seniors, mental health, dementia, suicide, and substance abuse.

Armstrong-Indiana Behavioral & Developmental Health Program
www.aibdhp.org

Alzheimer's Association
www.alz.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
www.afsp.org

Indiana County Department of Human Services
http://www.humanservices-countyofindiana.org/

Mental Health America
www.mentalhealthamerica.net

National Alliance on Mental Illness
www.nami.org

National Department of Health and Human Services
www.hhs.gov

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov

National Institute on Aging
www.nia.nih.gov

PA Department of Aging
www.aging.pa.gov

PA Department of Human Services
www.dhs.pa.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov

NOTES:

Armstrong-Indiana Crisis Services

Call: 1-877-333-2470

Text: 1-877-565-7744

Provided by The Open Door





