The Eisenhower Center for Geropsychiatry

Comprehensive Inpatient Care For Older Adults

The Center employs a highly-skilled multidisciplinary team who work together to provide the best care possible for their patients.

Loss is an inevitable part of life. But as we age, the losses seem to mount as spouses and friends grow ill or die, and our own health issues compromise our ability to function as we did when we were younger. It is no wonder that an estimated six percent of Americans over 65 suffer from depression each year, and as many as nine percent experience anxiety disorders.

There is good news, however: Eisenhower Medical Center has created an exceptionally comprehensive and compassionate inpatient center that provides mental health resources and support exclusively for people aged 65 and older. Located on the Eisenhower campus, the 12-bed Center for Geropsychiatry is a voluntary program offering intensive services for older adults who need support in stabilizing symptoms related to depression, anxiety, and other behavioral disorders.

“Sometimes individuals realize that they feel sad or unengaged in their lives, or a family member notices their loved one isn’t eating, sleeping, or taking care of themselves,” says Dixon Bennett, RN, Director of the Center. “We can help to alleviate symptoms, create greater support in daily life, and get the patient home as quickly as possible.” The average stay is six to ten days, and all rooms are private.

One of the Geropsychiatry program’s strengths is its emphasis on caring for the whole person.“Most people in this age group have medical issues compromised by aging, such as heart disease, hypertension, or diabetes,” Bennett explains. “That’s why we manage medical issues along with behavioral issues.”

Upon admission, an Eisenhower physician board certified in Internal Medicine and Geriatrics performs a complete medical history and physical with each patient. A psychiatrist conducts a mental status exam and psychiatric interview. A social worker completes a psychosocial assessment that includes family history and the effect of any adverse events in the patient’s life. A recreation therapist assesses the patient’s current functional, leisure and lifestyle skills, and subsequently assists the patient to develop skills, knowledge and behaviors for daily living and community involvement.

“We also complete a comprehensive medication reconciliation process to document current medications and dosages to determine if a drug interaction could be contributing to the presenting problems,” Bennett notes. “We sort out how or if medical issues are affecting behavioral issues. For example, if a woman with a urinary tract infection [UTI] is experiencing mental confusion, we’ll treat the UTI with antibiotics, and determine mental status improvement before adjusting psychoactive medications.”

“Half of working with people with behavioral disorders is engaging them in life again,” Bennett says. During their stay, patients participate in a daily program of scheduled activities and groups designed to enhance their health, functional abilities, independence and quality of life. The scheduled program includes groups and activities lead by social work, nursing and therapeutic recreation. With the patient’s consent, family members can participate in daily treatment team meetings, which also include the patient. “It creates an important dialogue,” shares Bennett.

The careful attention doesn’t end when the patient goes home. “We connect with the patient following discharge to determine if they followed up with their referrals (physician and community resources) as well as to determine if there’s anything more we can do,” Bennett says. “We’re not just treating an episode of depression or anxiety.We’re treating a human being.”

For more information, please call 760-837-8767, 24 hours a day. The inpatient program at the Eisenhower Center for Geropsychiatry is covered by Medicare and most major insurances.

Healthy Living is a publication of Eisenhower Medical Center · © Copyright 2013 All Rights Reserved · www.emc.org