



Name of Project: Healthy IDEAS (Identifying Depression, Empowering Activities for Seniors) for Caregivers of Persons with Dementia

Name of Organization: Office of Elder Services – Department of Health and Human Services, Augusta, ME

Description of Program

The Office of Elder Services (OES), Department of Health and Human Services, with funding from the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grant to States Program (ADDGS) and in partnership with the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), Partners in Healthy Aging and the Muskie School of Public Service is implementing **Healthy IDEAS**, an evidence-based depression prevention program.

While Healthy IDEAS was developed for older adults with chronic conditions, OES has innovatively adapted the program to identify and address depressive symptoms in **caregivers** of individuals with dementia to improve their well-being and quality of life. OES is focused on promoting health and well-being of caregivers through behavioral changes in lifestyles to reduce risks of disease, including depression. Since caregivers' ability to provide care to individuals in the community is partially contingent on their health, it is anticipated that Healthy IDEAS may help individuals with dementia remain in their homes longer, avoiding or delaying nursing home placement.

Research shows that the program is effective in reducing depressive symptoms in older adults with chronic conditions by empowering individuals through self-care and self-management. Data collection and analysis will be completed to determine whether the outcomes with caregivers are consistent with the research.

Healthy IDEAS is an integrated component of an existing respite program for caregivers of individuals with dementia. This respite program began as a model using ADDGS funds and subsequently was determined to be so valuable that it was funded by a state appropriation. All caregivers participating in the program are provided information and educational materials on depressive symptoms. They are offered the opportunity to be screened for depressive symptoms using a simple, two-question screening tool. For those who "screen-in", meaning depression is indicated, a nine-question assessment is provided per their agreement to determine the severity of their depressive symptoms. For caregivers who score mild to moderate in the assessment, behavioral activation is available to help them identify and engage in activities to reduce their depressive symptoms. Referral to community mental health services is an option for caregivers who identify wanting treatment and/or therapy for their depressive symptoms. A physician/consultant is contracted to provide training and consultation about issues related to depression and other topics related to mental health with those implementing Healthy IDEAS.

Inter and intra agency collaboration has been critical to the successful implementation of Healthy IDEAS in the areas of education, resource identification, referral and linkages. Additional partners with the ADDGS grant include the Office of Adult Mental Health Services, Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), Family Caregiver Programs (FCPs), and community based mental health service providers to actively continue planning, advising, developing, and supporting the Project.

Alzheimer's Coordinators at the AAAs have screened over eighty caregivers since January '08. Depression was indicated in approximately forty-five percent of those screened. All but four of the caregivers who "screened-in" completed the assessment. Currently there are fifteen caregivers involved in behavioral activation.

For more information about Healthy IDEAS, contact 1-800-ELDERS or OES at 287-9200.