

# AMH Geropsych Unit Helps Seniors Cope With Life's Experiences

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It's possible to stay in your own community for your mental health needs. The Center for Senior Renewal at Alton Memorial Hospital includes a 20-bed inpatient program as well as an outpatient follow-up program.

Both of these programs concentrate on the mental health of older adults. As people age, there are many life experiences that people encounter. Sometimes it is difficult for individuals and families to talk about these experiences. Some people feel that they have to live with their problems or hurtful feelings and don't know where to turn.



“Since individuals feel that they cannot talk about their feelings, other unresolved life problems may develop,” said Mary Holmes, supervisor of the inpatient unit. “The person might not be able to sleep, they have a loss of appetite, lose interest in things that they previously participated in and can develop numerous physical complaints with no medical findings. These can all be signs and symptoms of depression or grief.”

In addition to depression, older adults might experience confusion. Confusion can develop from a number of issues such as poor nutrition, problems with medication, undiagnosed physical problem such as a urinary tract infection or some other type of infection, or a circulatory problem. Signs of confusion can also develop from early stages of a dementia or Alzheimer’s disease.

“The inpatient unit has a goal to help patients achieve a level of functioning that preserves as much independence as possible,” Holmes said. “We have an experienced and specially trained team who care for older adults with a variety of mental health issues. The staff also works closely with families so they know what living arrangements will be needed after discharge.”

Some patients will be referred to the outpatient program for follow-up care. Both programs are under the medical direction of a board-certified psychiatrist. Each staff member ensures that patients receive respect, consideration and the highest quality of appropriate care each day. To access inpatient services, patients or loved ones can be screened for admission by calling the intake nurse 24 hours a day at 618 463-7099. The inpatient area accepts Medicare and a number of managed care programs.

The outpatient Senior Renewal program focuses on restoring quality of life for older adults facing emotional issues. The program provides individual therapy, group therapy, psychiatric care, and coordination with community resources and other treatment providers. The groups provide people the chance to meet new people and talk and learn about their problems and get results. Patients do not have to be referred from the inpatient program. To make an appointment, call 618-463-7895 Monday through Friday, or leave a message and you will receive a call back on the next work day. The outpatient program is covered by Medicare Part B and most secondary commercial health plans. Complimentary transportation is provided.