

Depression in Later Life: An Essential Guide

Deborah Serani

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers (Jun 19, 2016)

Hardcover \$35.00 (286pp)

978-1-4422-5582-1

This well-researched, effectively written, and highly readable guide to late-life depression deserves a wide audience.

Deborah Serani, a doctor and the author of two previous books on depression, now covers twilight periods in *Depression in Later Life*, a myth-busting, fact-based guide for seniors that belongs on the bookshelf of anyone dealing with this misunderstood disease.

Each of the eleven chapters ends with a real-life anecdote drawn from Serani's twenty-plus years of practice. These examples serve as illustrations of the chapters' topics, which proves to be a necessary and well-crafted technique for showing the realities of later-life depression. Six appendixes provide a wealth of information on vital topics, including depression screening, medications, and resources. Extensive notes, a glossary, and an index are also included, resulting in an easy-to-look-up format. The book's subtitle, "An Essential Guide," proves accurate: patients and caregivers will benefit greatly from Serani's breadth of knowledge and non-academic writing style.

Numerous charts and figures detail the psychological terms used throughout, with clear and easily understood words and graphics. The melding of text and illustrations is seamless, enhancing and supporting Serani's knowledge without interrupting the text. Figures like one of an "Interpersonal Model of Late-Life Suicide" are stark yet vital additions to the work; their messages include the warning that phrases like "I don't want to be a burden" may not just be things older people say.

Perhaps the most important chapter is "15 Late-Life Depression Myths Everyone Should Know." In it, Serani presents and dispels myths with scientific facts in a warm, conversational, reassuring tone. The stigma of depression is neatly dealt with by debunking myths such as the idea that depression is a normal part of aging, or that depression affects seniors in the same way as it does younger people, or that talking about depression makes things worse. These explorations go a long way toward reducing the stigma of depression in seniors.

An appendix featuring the names of luminaries who lived with, or who are living with, depression proves similarly eye-opening and fascinating. It stands as proof that those suffering with depression are not alone, and that success in life can be achieved in spite of depression's debilitating effects.

At the center of the book is the understanding that depression can occur at any time in life. This is key in understanding depression as a disease, especially in that it can be temporary or chronic, and how it can be treated. Serani makes a convincing case, based on facts and in her own experience with depression, that depression is not one disease, but exists along a spectrum.

This well-researched, effectively written, and highly readable guide to late-life depression deserves a wide audience.

J. G. STINSON (July 28, 2016)

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