

# Older People and Depression: Key Knowledge and Skills for Effective Biopsychosocial Intervention

Some older people really do have a lot to be depressed about, and it is difficult to know how to help. This course shows how.

A 3-day course for 6-15 people (2-day version also available).

## Executive Summary:

It is true, as William Davies says, that “Many older people are depressed, and many older people have a lot to be depressed about”. It would be surprising if it were otherwise, what with longstanding friends dying, being physically unable to do things they previously enjoyed doing, having pains and other biological processes disturbing them, having less future to look forward to, and cognitive processes sometimes not being as acute as they once were. On the other hand, it is not true that all older people are depressed, and, for those who are, we can often make some significantly helpful interventions. This course is therefore about (a) recognising depression in older people, (b) being aware of any risks this presents, and mostly (c) intervening in a constructive and helpful way. Major teaching methods are: lecture, case studies, small group exercises, and large group discussions.

## Who should attend?

People who attend this course normally fall into one of two categories:

1. Professionals who spend the majority of their time working with older people.
2. Professionals who, while older people may not be their primary speciality, nevertheless need to get ‘up to speed’ on the subject.

The professional affiliations of people suitable to attend this course include: mental health/psychiatric nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, and others.

## The course covers:

1. The nature of depression: Incidence, DSM-IV and ICD-10 criteria for diagnosis, behavioural, biological, cognitive and emotional symptoms.
2. Why are older people vulnerable to depression: Life events, hope for the future, physical health, social changes.
3. Assessment and Risk Assessment: Risk factors for (a) becoming depressed and (b) suicide. Gaining information from the person concerned, others, and records. Key questions. Screening tools. Aspects that

need particular care. Physical causes for depression-like symptoms. The principal fixed and fluid factors in risk assessment.

4. Differential diagnosis: Dementia, depression or both? Similarities and differences. Normal adjustment to loss and when and how this may become depression.
5. Engaging older people in therapy. Common difficulties and how to overcome them.
6. Biological intervention: 'Life-style' biological effects, pharmacological and medical interventions.
7. Psychological therapy: interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT), the major interpersonal problems and strategies for helping with them. Relevant elements from cognitive-behavioural therapy. A multi-modal approach.
8. Broadening out from the individual: working with families.
9. Creating a positive environment and culture in residential settings. Developing a person-centred approach, good standards of care, and high quality of life. The NSF recommendations.
10. Looking after ourselves: maintaining an optimistic and realistic attitude.

## What the course will do for you:

1. You will be better able to recognise depression in older people and to differentiate it from other disorders that produce similar symptoms.
2. You will better understand why older people may get depressed, and therefore be able to experience an ‘informed empathy’ and so be better at engaging older people into therapy.
3. You will be better able to assess the risks around an older person being depressed, and to manage those risks.
4. You will know about, and be able to offer, a multi modal approach to intervention, covering biological, behavioural, cognitive and interpersonal factors, including reference to the surroundings, whether family or residential home.
5. You will have a more energetic and optimistic attitude to working with depression in older people.

To discuss or place an order call **0116 241 8331** or email [office@apt.ac](mailto:office@apt.ac)

Over 100,000 professionals have benefitted from attending APT courses; APT tutors are a resource of academic and clinical expertise probably unequalled in the UK.

APT, The Dower House, Thurnby, Leicestershire, LE7 9PH | Tel: 0116 241 8331 | Email: [office@apt.ac](mailto:office@apt.ac) | Web: [www.apt.ac](http://www.apt.ac)

### Delegates' Feedback

Average presentation rating: **96%**



Average relevance rating: **93%**



#### Written Feedback:

"Very enjoyable, very beneficial. The tutor was approachable and an excellent speaker ... Highly recommended to others. I feel more motivated now with the knowledge I can take back to the ward I work on. I have been in my profession for many years and still feel I have learnt a lot these past 3 days."

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