



Anxiety in Seniors

M. Milar Moore
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
At Home Psychiatry LLC

Talk Outline

- Getting our Bearings (3 minutes)
- Prevention (5 min)
- Identifying Anxiety in Seniors (7 min)
- Determining Severity (5 min)
- Home Management (12 min)
- Professional Treatment
 - Counseling (5 min)
 - Medical (8 min)
- Questions?

A Starting Place



- Scratching the surface
- Reducing judgment and stigma
- Maintaining compassion and respect
- Importance of empowerment and autonomy

Preventing Anxiety: Life in Balance

- Realistic expectations
- Social support (people, pets)
- Pleasure/fun/laughter
- Meaning/mindfulness/faith/grief
- Sleep
- Physical activity
- Nutrition
- Sunlight
- Being able to express our concerns
- Good primary care (heart, lung, thyroid, adrenal, etc.)
- Affirmation, esteem
- Self-efficacy, agency



Recognizing Anxiety in Seniors

- Worry
- Restlessness
- Withdrawal/avoidance
- Pessimism
- Irritability
- Lack of pleasure/satisfaction
- Sensitivity
- Increased medical problems
- Disrupted sleep
- Obsessive or repetitive behaviors
- Appetite changes



Assessing Anxiety Severity

- Subjective /objective
- Self-harm risk
- Effect on daily function
- Quality of life
- Simple instruments
 - GAS
 - Hamilton
 - Beck
 - Include with referral!

Geriatric Anxiety Scale (Short Version)
Developed by Jeff Baker, Ph.D. - To be used for Teaching Purposes Only

Answers indicating anxiety are IN ALL CAPITALS (See OnLine Form. Each answer in all CAPS counts one point; scores greater than 5 indicate anxious symptoms, the higher the score the more indication of anxiety.

Student Last Name:

Student First Name:

Patient Initials:

Date Administered:

1. Do you feel nervous much of the time?
2. Have you worried about your future this week?
3. Do you feel that your life is too fast?
4. Do you often get anxious?
5. Have you felt relaxed most of today?
6. Are you feel afraid at different times during the day?
7. Do you feel stress free most of the time?
8. Does your stomach feel nervous much of the time?
9. Do you prefer to have someone with you most of the time?
10. Do you feel you have more anxiety than most?
11. Do you find it easy to sleep at night?
12. Do you feel pretty stressed now?
13. Do you feel you have more energy than yesterday?
14. Do you feel that you cannot remember things like you used to?
15. Do you think most people are less anxious than you?

Total ANXIETY Score:

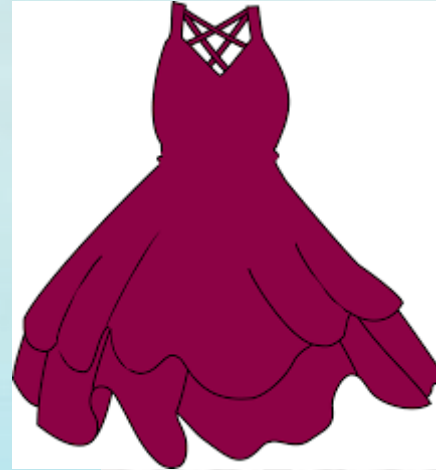
Managing Anxiety: The 3 A's

- Alter the situation
- Adapt to the stressor
- Accept the unchangeable



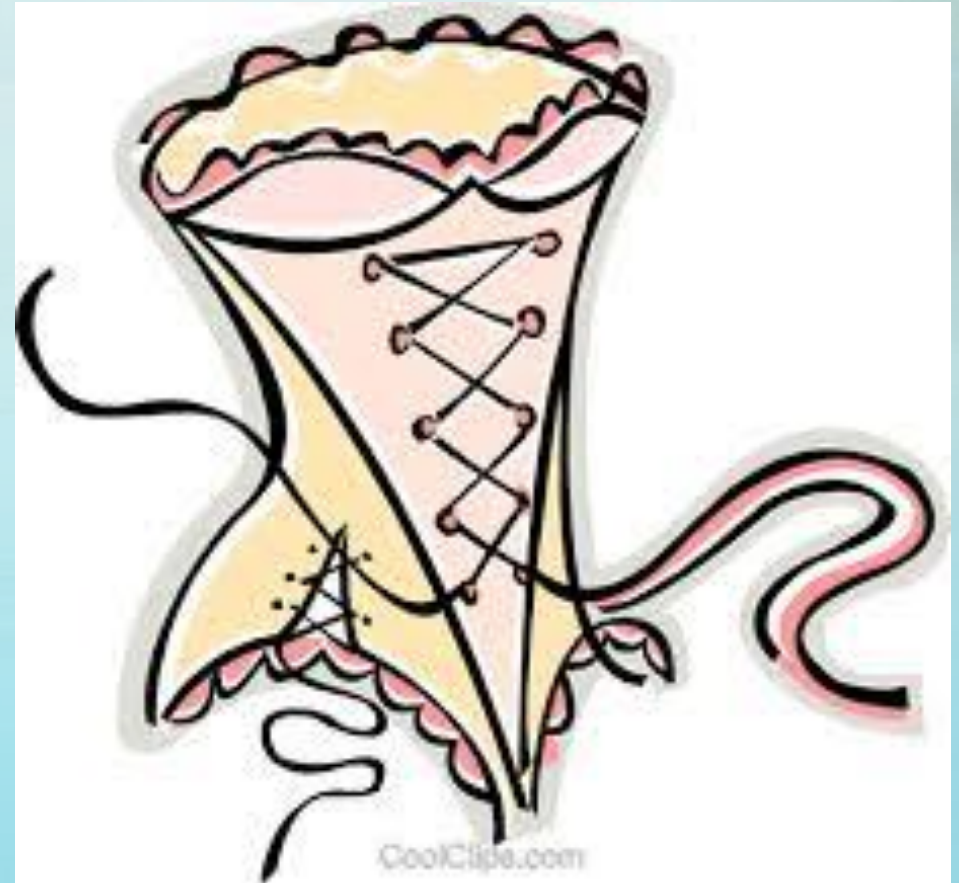
ALTER

- Change the stressor
- Express your concerns
- Be willing to compromise
- Balance your schedule
- Ask for what you need



ADAPT

- Change your response to the stressor
- Reframe problems
- Take a longer view
- Adjust your standards
- Practice gratitude



ACCEPT

- Don't try to control the uncontrollable
- Look for opportunities
- Forgive and seek forgiveness
- Embrace grief
- Be open and share

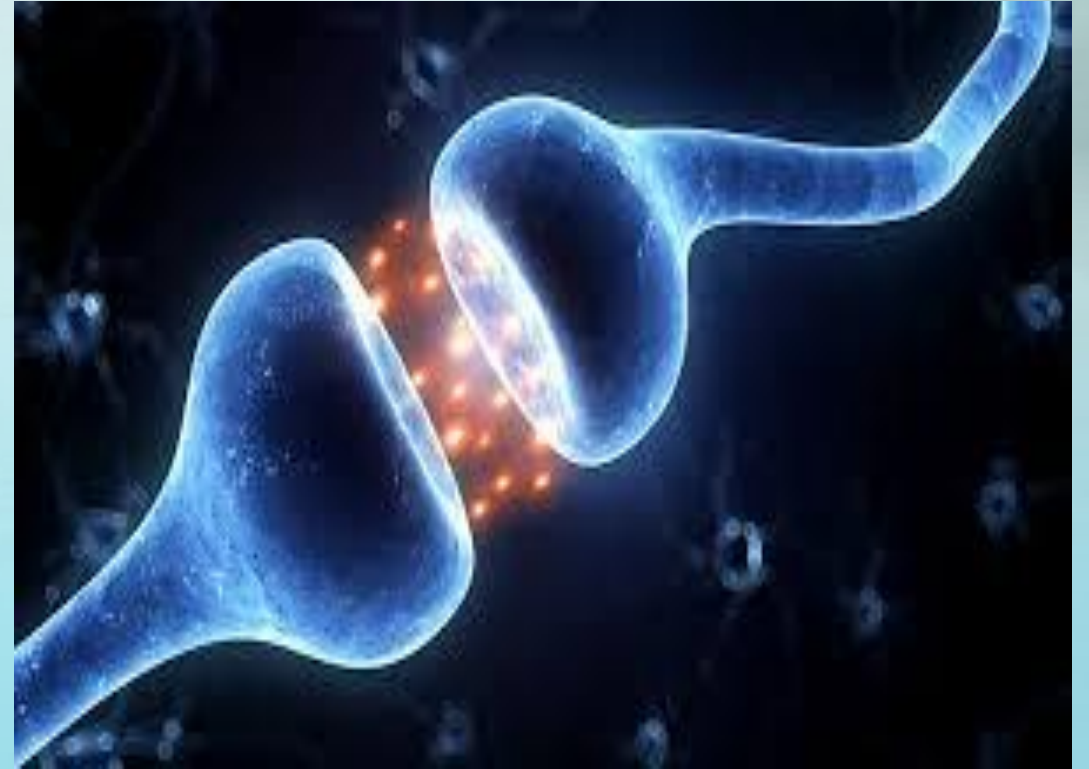


When Anxiety Self-Care Isn't Enough

- Unable to function
- Causing damage, self-harm, threat to health, financial peril
- History of acute trauma
- Possible underlying medical cause
- Consider counseling or behavior therapy
- If anxiety precludes counseling, start with medical intervention to control symptoms enough to allow therapy.

Common Anxiety Medications

- Benzodiazepines
- Serotonin agents
- Special concerns in aging
 - Slowed clearance
 - Polypharmacy
 - Falls
 - Sensitivity to side effects



A misty, teal-toned landscape with mountains and water. The scene is hazy, with soft light filtering through the fog. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the surrounding environment. The mountains in the background are partially obscured by the mist, creating a sense of depth and tranquility. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of blue and green, giving it a serene and ethereal feel.

Questions?

Thank you!

