
COMPANION GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Module: Anxiety

Overview

The module format is designed to provide general information, facts, and sample reflection/discussion questions about anxiety in older age.

Before the presentation, review the PowerPoint, especially the “notes” pages for a suggested script. You can customize and revise them based on community needs and your audience. You can remove and/or add information that is relevant for your community.

- For example: If you have a specific statistic relating to anxiety in your community, add that.
- For example: Add your local community resources to the Resources slide.

Introduction to This Module

Subject

This module focuses on addressing anxiety as a normal part of life that older adults might encounter on a routine basis. It illustrates the positive aspects of aging, describes symptoms of anxiety, introduces symptoms and common sources of anxiety in old age and approaches for managing and preventing anxiety. This module also provides an opportunity for the audience to share knowledge and experience in coping with anxiety.

Intended audience

The intended audience for all community education and awareness modules is older adults in the community in which you are serving. The audience may vary depending on whether you work in a rural, urban, small, large, etc. community.

Importance of anxiety and older adults

- According to Anxiety and Depression Association of America, anxiety is the most common mental health condition, affecting up to half of older adults, and it is often under-recognized.
- The prevalence of anxiety keeps increasing in very old age. If anxiety is not recognized and dealt with appropriately, it can cause more severe health problems such as depression, decreased daily functioning, and lower overall quality and satisfaction in life.

Module objectives

At the end of the presentation, the audience should be able to:

- understand how emotional well-being improves with age
- define anxiety and understand it is a normal part of life
- understand some physical and mental symptoms of anxiety
- be aware of and recognize factors/sources that might increase possibility of anxiety
- understand why it is important to recognize symptoms of anxiety and manage it
- be aware of some questions that can be asked to find out if someone may be anxious
- understand general ways in which to manage anxiety
- be aware of when anxiety has become severe and not subsyndromal
- reflect on facts about anxiety and apply them to their own lives

Module Layout

Module structure

Slide #	Slide	Key Points (For full script, please refer to notes section on each slide)
1 (U)	<u>Title:</u> Is anxiety affecting your health?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenter self-introduction • Organization that presenter is representing
2 (U)	Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants introduce themselves. • Consider the size of the group and adjust the introduction
3	<u>Good news</u> about emotional health improvement with age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets a stage to indicate that the majority of older adults are emotionally and mentally healthy. • Describes why older people manage emotional well-being better than many others.
4	<u>What is Anxiety?</u> From good news to anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most prevalent and under-recognized mental health condition in older adults • Introduce the continuum of anxiety based on its disruptive effect on life
5	Physical/body symptoms of anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly physical symptoms listed • Not for self-diagnosis, but a starting point to recognize possible problems
6	Mental/mind symptoms of anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on mental aspects of anxiety
7 (U)	Sources of anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes older people feel anxious on a daily basis? • Add examples here if any.
8	Why be concerned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequences if anxiety is not addressed • Explains why it is important to recognize anxiety

9 (U)	<u>Reflection:</u> Do you or someone you know have anxiety?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A time for audience to reflect on their own activities and level of anxiety • Add other questions or remove questions if you feel there are other screening questions that are relevant.
10 (U)	How to manage anxiety?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety management suggestions • Add more resources if you find any.
11	When is it time to ask for help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the level of anxiety is past being normal, be aware and ask for professional help.
12 (U)	Mental tips might also help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the effectiveness of some simple mental tips
13 (U)	<u>Interactive discussion:</u> What triggers anxiety and how do we adapt?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start the discussion with examples provided in the companion guide or another example that you prefer. • Facilitate group discussions to encourage participants to learn from each other. • You can use small group discussions or a large group discussion (depending on audience comfort and size of group). • Ask for more examples from the audience and share stories with respectful listening and appropriate facilitation.
14 (U)	Community resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe resources available in your community.
15 (U)	Thank you and questions	
16 (U)	Acknowledgments	PSU, authors of the slides

Interactive session

- The primary interactive activity in this module is the “Discussion” on slide 13.
- The goal of the interactive session is to engage participants in reflecting on their own experience with anxiety and how do they deal with worries, fear, and anxiety. Also, we expect participants to share their previous success stories of coping with anxiety to help other older adults who might be going through similar situations.
- To start conversations among participants, here is an example of adaptation to ease anxiety: for some older adults, there is the situation of not being able to see very well at night anymore, which can cause anxiety driving at night, or driving at all. There could be many ways to adapt to vision changes, such as driving during the day instead of the night, getting a ride from a friend, using public transportation, using social programs for transportation, walking if possible, or others.
- A few more examples of talking points: ways to adapt to different life changes, such as moving and loss.
- Please adjust the number of people in discussion groups and length of the discussion session according to the size of your audience and available space. For example, you can pair people or organize them in small groups.

Adjustments made by user(s) of the slides

- You are the key to making the presentation relevant and meaningful to your audience. Please feel free to add, delete, modify, and rearrange slides according to your community's situation.
- In the "Module Structure," the capital letter "U" (for User) indicates the slides for which you may want to include information specific to your community.

Logistics

Length of presentation

The presentation should take approximately 20 minutes, not including discussion. Please decide time for group discussion based on the interests and size of your audience. The whole session could vary from approximately 30 minutes to one hour.

Special equipment requirements

To have a productive presentation, you will need a projector, a laptop (or computer located at presentation location), Internet connection (optional, for videos,), note-taking paper for the audience, chairs, and handouts (to give after the presentation).

Other considerations

Consider the following items for your audience and the meeting space:

- Is the space accessible?
- Is there parking?
- Is the presentation space large enough to accommodate the audience?
- What kind of seating is available (suitable for older adults)?
- Is there enough lighting, ventilation, air conditioning in summer or heating in winter?
- Are there enough outlets, phone jacks, etc. to support equipment needs?
- Can beverages/snacks be provided? Consider possible audience food limitations (i.e., provide fruit rather than cookies).

Local resources

What local resources can you bring related to anxiety?

- Consider bringing brochures on community activity groups, community events flyers, community center brochures, etc.
- Also consider helpful guides on anxiety such as: handouts of helpful awareness information on the subject.

Marketing your presentation

- Consider contacting your local community and/or senior center as a place to present.

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- Ask if they will advertise your presentation on their website or community board
 - Contact your community partners/contacts to market your presentation with their clients.
 - Create and distribute a flyer for your event.

Supporting Materials

Information sources

- Slides with information from the literature will name either an author or an organization at the bottom of that slide. Please see the references below for more information about any of these sources.
- We retrieved the information from nationally and/or internationally recognized organizations/publishers and made efforts to make sure the information in the slides is reliable and up-to-date (November 2015).

References

Resources for participants

Here are two example resources for participants; feel free to add more:

- [Behavioral Health Options, Seniors and Anxiety \(2013\).](#)
- [ADAA, Tips to manage anxiety \(2010-2015\).](#)

Resources (used for presentation and additional resources)

- [Anxiety and Depression Association of America, Symptoms \(2015\).](#)
- [Anxiety and Depression Association of America, Afraid of falling \(2015\).](#)
- [Diefenbach et al, Minor GAD: characteristics of subsyndromal GAD in older adults, \(2003\). Behaviour Research and Therapy, 41\(4\): 481-7.](#)
- [Mental Health America, Mental health screening tools \(2015\).](#)
- [NIH Anxiety Disorders, What are anxiety disorders \(2015\).](#)
- [NIH Senior Health, What are different types of anxiety disorders \(2015\).](#)
- [National Council on Aging, B4Stage4, Anxiety in older adults one-pager \(2015\).](#)
- [NIH Senior Health, 33 frequently asking questions about geriatric anxiety disorders \(2015\).](#)
- [WebMD, Anxiety often missed in elderly \(2006\).](#)