

Chapter Title	Section #	Subject #	
Clinical	C	320.10	
Subject Title	Adopted	Last Revised	Reviewed
Older Adult Services	6/26/24	6/26/24	NEW

PROCEDURE

Application

This procedure shall apply to The Right Door for Hope, Recovery and Wellness (The Right Door).

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to identify practices for the delivery of services to older adults served by providers of The Right Door.

According to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) website, less than 40% of older adults with mental/substance use disorders seek treatment. It is critical for the overall wellness of older adults in Ionia County that The Right Door provide outreach and interventions that are engaging and meaningful for older adults. The SAMSHA website also highlights that males over 85 years of age have one of the highest suicide rates in the Country. Older adults are often not likely to seek out mental health or substance use treatment due to numerous reasons including stigma and attributing symptoms to align with physical health issues vs mental health issues. Co-morbidities are common with the older adult population, such as mental health/substance use disorders and common chronic health issues such as cardiac diseases, chronic pain, diabetes, hearing loss, and COPD. Older adults are often impacted by social isolation, often driven by health conditions, hearing loss, mobility issues, and limited transportation options. The Right Door for Hope, Recovery, and Wellness recognizes that good healthcare and social care for older adults impacts their overall mental and physical health.

The Right Door will partner and foster relationships with other providers in the area to enhance the specialized and often complex care needs of older adults. Partnering with other providers will essentially wrap services and supports around older adults to address issues specific to the older adult phase of life, such as caregiver wellness, general wellness programs, nutritional support, education/awareness programs specific to health-related issues, scams, housing, finances, legal issues, leisure options, and home and community safety.

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Outreach to older adults in Ionia County should be promoted by The Right Door, including but not exclusive to Senior Day at the Ionia Free Fair, Veterans Day at the Ionia Free Fair, internal health fair and Senior Santa.

The Right Door providers should increase awareness of issues related to older adults such as:

- How changes in metabolism as one ages can impact the effectiveness of medications;
- Grief can impact one's mental health at any age, however older adults are particularly vulnerable due to likelihood of multiple and significant losses;
- Medications that are prescribed for health conditions impacting older adults can exacerbate mental health/substance use issues;
- Sensory issues, cognitive and functional impairments can complicate symptoms of a mental health or substance use disorder;
- Older adults are more likely to avoid professional mental health or substance use treatment and instead look more towards their clergy, family members, or other persons they trust;
- As the older adult population grows, the need for professionals with cultural awareness and multiple language skills is growing.

1. Providers of The Right Door who are providing services to older adults should factor in the following as they provide services to this special population.

1.1. The desires and functioning of each older adult served shall be incorporated into their person-centered planning. Aging in place in accordance with the person's served goals and wishes should be respected and honored whenever possible.

1.2. Services and interventions shall promote optimal aging through prevention, self-management skills, and engagement in purposeful, meaningful, and stimulating activities.

1.3. Services and interventions should target the needs and desires of older adults.

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- 1.4. Whenever feasible, The Right Door should promote activities that would draw the interest of older adults and enhance their overall well-being.
- 1.5. Enhancing skills development of providers related to specific needs of older adults may create a professional environment that is more welcoming to older adults.
- 1.6. Standardized screening and assessment tools and instruments should be utilized that have been validated for use with older adults (PHQ-9 and GAD-7) as well as evidenced based best practices that have been identified for older adults, including but not limited to CBT, DBT and IPT (Interpersonal Psychotherapy). Regular screening for suicidality should be incorporated into services provided to older adults.
- 1.7. Providers shall assist the older adult and their support system to be aware of community resources, ensure necessary supports are in place to promote health, safety, and general wellness.
- 1.8. Providers should be aware of and seek to avoid agism and promoting stigma of mental health and substance use services when working with older adults.
- 1.9. Providers should focus on supporting the older adults under their care to be as independent and fully functioning as possible and increasing the awareness of caregivers about needs and available supports for older adults and their families, including respite, support groups, caregiver trainings and topic specific trainings.
- 1.10. Providers should work in collaboration with caregivers to promote advanced care planning, end-of-life care and end-of-life decision making and other community resources that will enhance the life of the older adult.

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1.11. Providers should be aware that there is not one universally accepted definition of “older adults”. Acknowledging that people age differently is important as providers attempt to enhance the lives of all served.

Reference:

CCBHC Older Adult Population Criteria

Kerry Possehn, CEO	Date		