



# Mental Health Needs of Older Adults

[www.nln.org/ACES](http://www.nln.org/ACES)

# Essential Nursing Actions

<p><b>Assess Function and Expectations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Assess, respond to, and respect an older adult’s functional status and strengths, wishes, and expectations.</li> <li>❖ Determine the older adult’s function and expectations, along with cognition, mood, culture, physiologic status, and comfort to obtain a comprehensive assessment of health care needs.</li> <li>❖ Use standardized assessment tools to assess the older adult’s individual aging pattern.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Coordinate and Manage Care</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Manage chronic conditions, including atypical presentations, in daily life and during life transitions to maximize function and maintain independence.</li> <li>❖ Assist older adults and families/caregivers to access knowledge and evaluate resources.</li> <li>❖ Advocate during acute exacerbations of chronic conditions to prevent complications.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Use Evolving Knowledge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Understand geriatric syndromes and unique presentations of common diseases in older adults.</li> <li>❖ Access and use emerging information and research evidence about the special care needs of older adults and appropriate treatment options.</li> <li>❖ Interpret findings and evaluate clinical situations in order to provide high quality nursing care based on current knowledge and best practices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Make Situational Decisions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Analyze risks and benefits of care decisions in collaboration with the interdisciplinary team and the older adult, family, and caregivers.</li> <li>❖ Evaluate situations where standard treatment recommendations need to be modified to manage care in the context of the older adult’s needs and life transitions.</li> <li>❖ Consider the older adult’s wishes, expectations, resources, lived experiences, culture, and strengths when modifying care approaches.</li> </ul>

# Assess Function and Expectations

- Ask the question...

What is current function and how far is current function from baseline?





# Common Mental Health Issues Seen in Older Adults

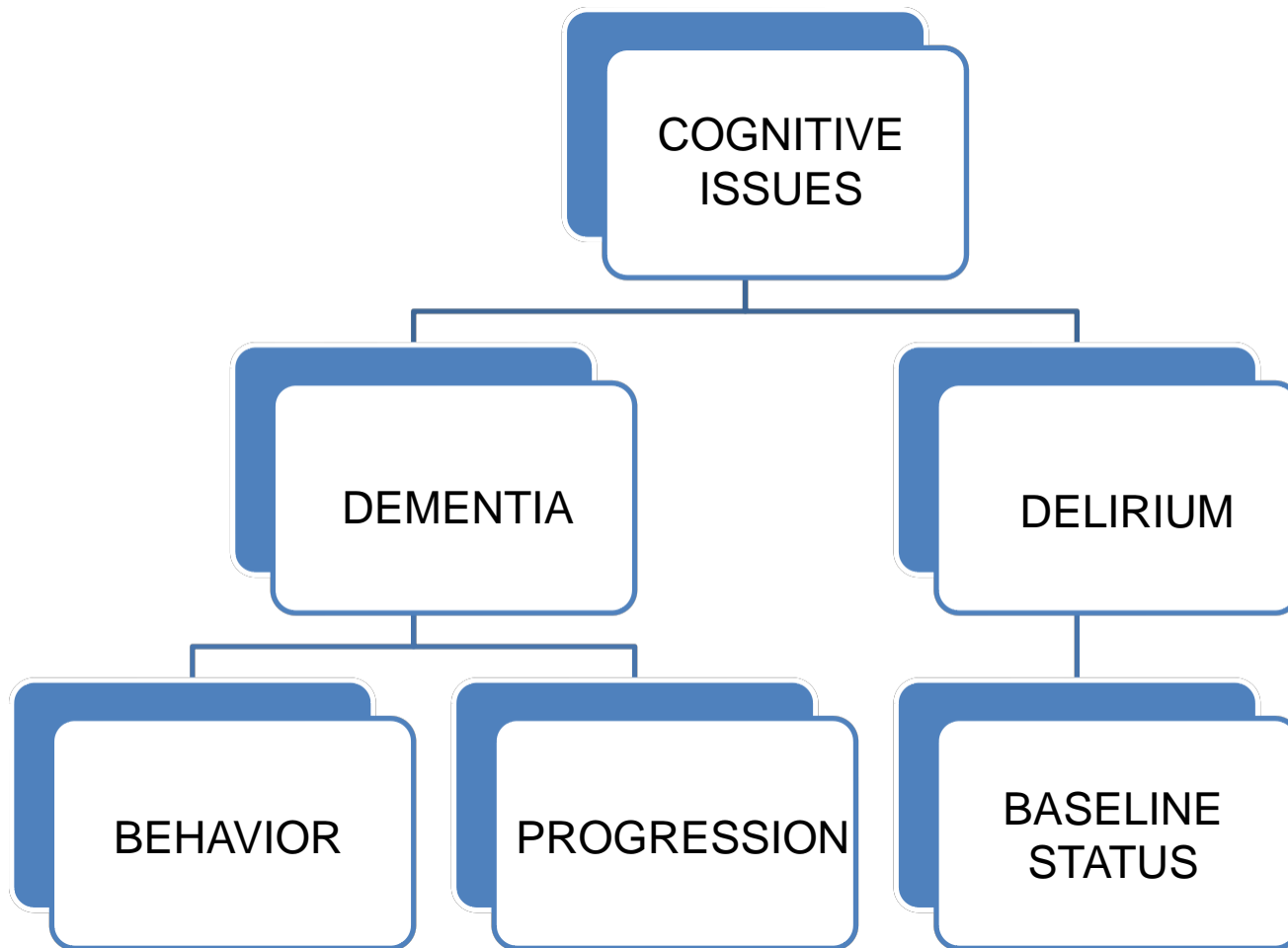
- Cognitive Issues
- Mood Issues
- Anxiety

# Functioning as a Predictor

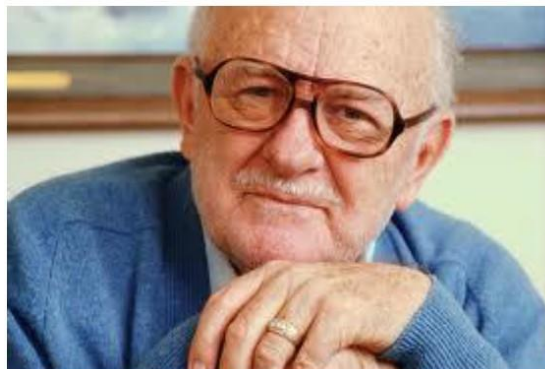
- Physical Assessments
- Mental Health Assessments
- Separate...Equal...and Intertwined



# Cognitive Issues

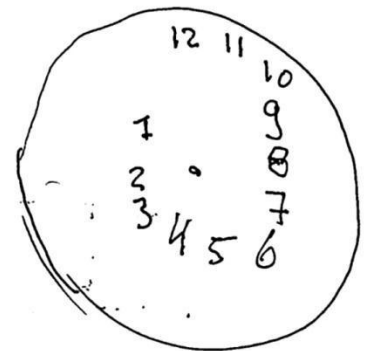
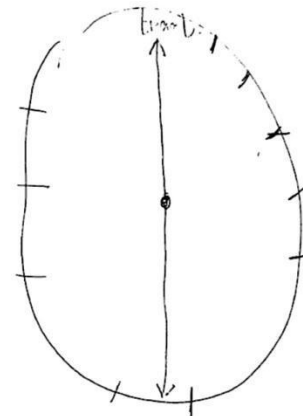
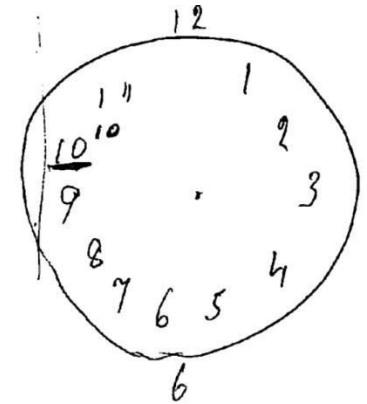
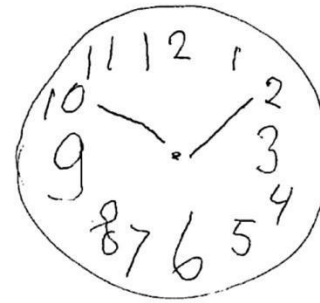


# Atypical is the Norm with Cognitive Issues



# Cognitive Disorders

- Baseline functioning
- Time Frame of change
- Functional disparity
- Client perception
- Family perception
- Examiner's perception



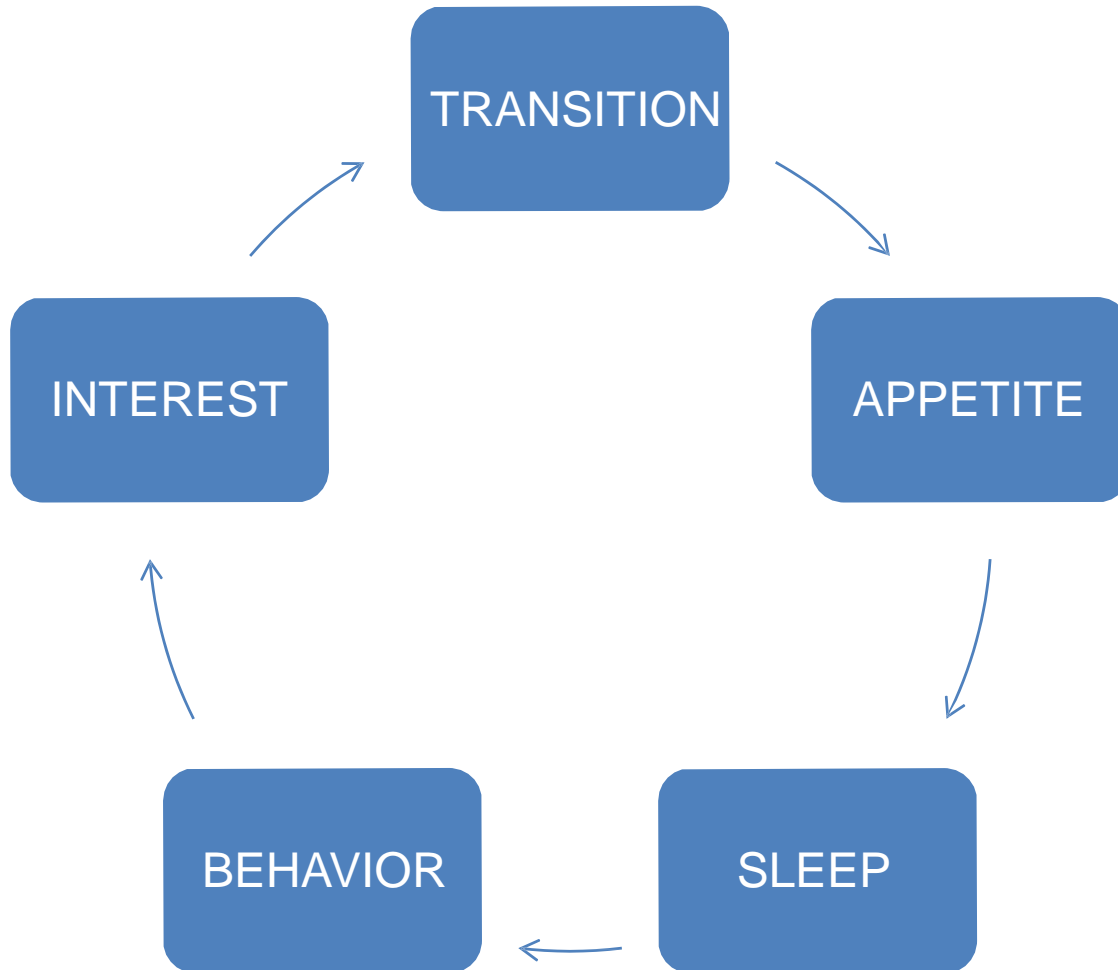


# Coordination and Management of Care

- Atypical Presentation of Cognitive Issues
  - Baseline functioning
  - Time Frame of change
  - Client perception
  - Family perception
  - Examiner's perception



# Depression



# Coordination and Management of Care

- Atypical Presentation of  
Mood Disorders

Baseline functioning

Time Frame of change

Client perception

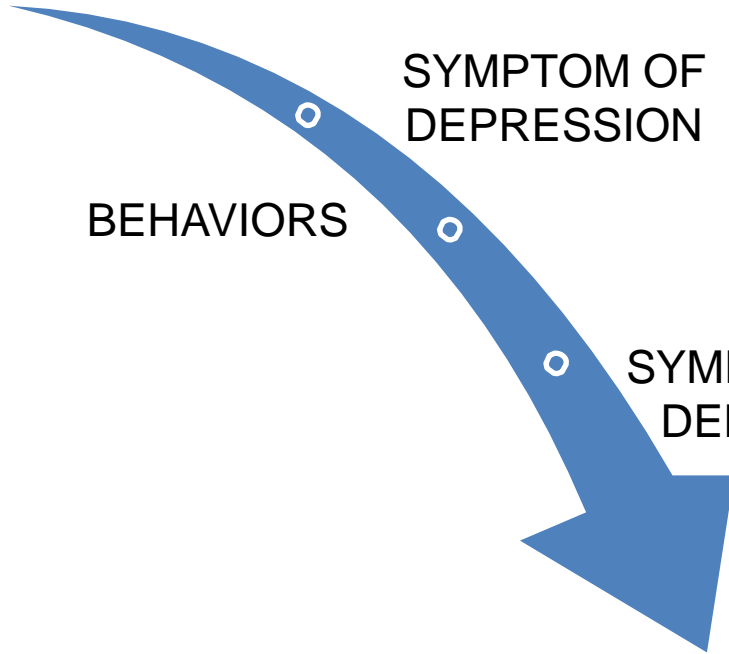
Family perception

Examiner's perception



# Anxiety

TRANSITION

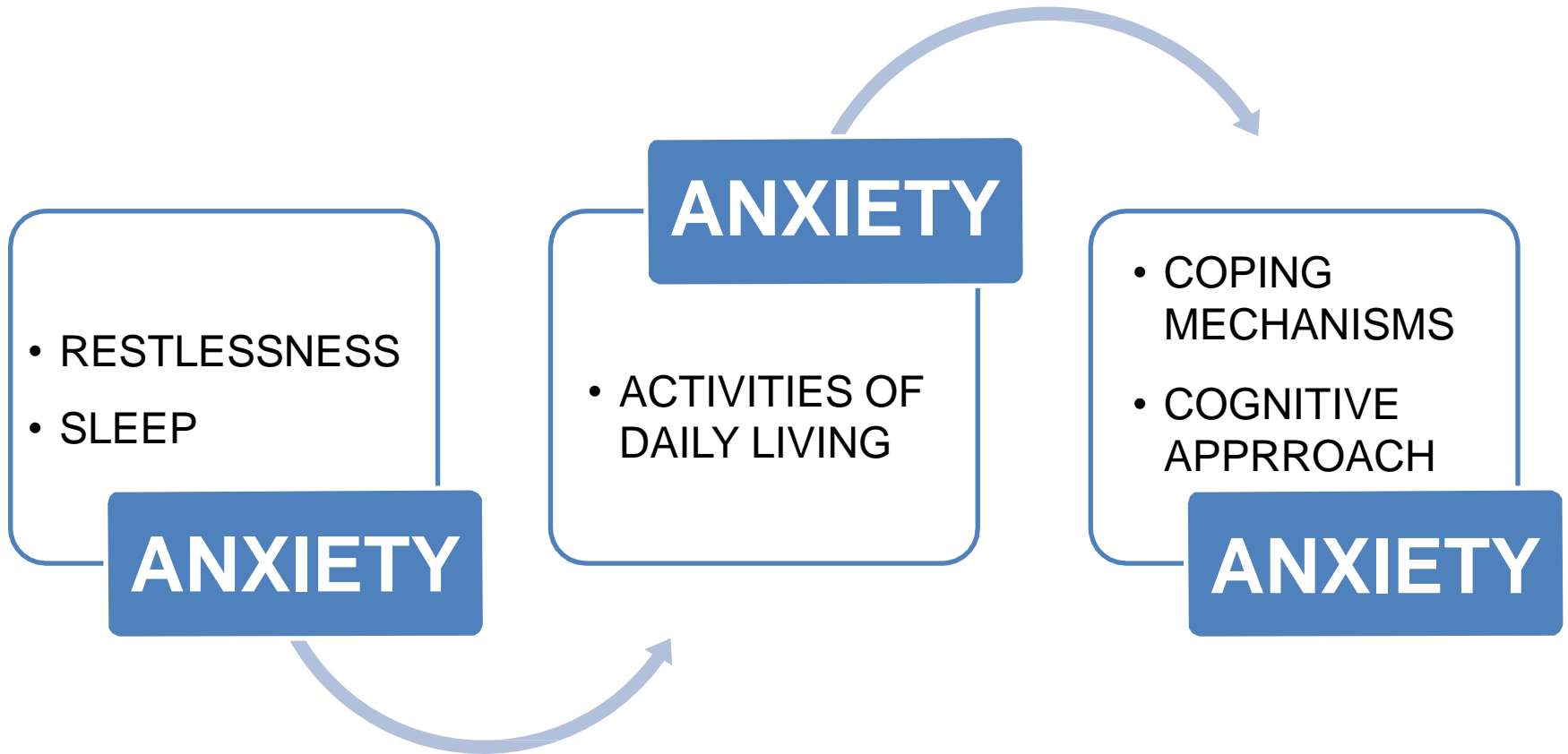


SYMPTOM OF  
DEPRESSION

BEHAVIORS

SYMPTOM OF  
DEMENTIA

BASELINE

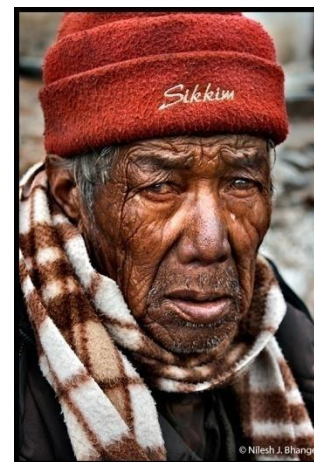


# Mental Health Assessments

- Mini-Cog
- Geriatric Depression Scale
- Caregiver Strain Index
- Recognition of Dementia in hospitalized older adults
- Short Michigan Alcohol Screening Tool



**How To** 





But you're doing ok *for your age*

# Use Evolving Knowledge

- Geriatric Syndromes
  - clusters of related symptoms that are complicated...
- overwhelming to practitioners...and often overlooked
- Dementia...Delirium...and Depression





# Make Situational Decisions



- Do physical outcomes outweigh psychological outcomes?
- Who gets to make the choice?
- Can a situation be too safe?



# The discussion should start with...

- “What risks are you willing to take to optimize the quality of your life?”
- “Who do you talk with about decisions you make?”
- “How would you know if you started to need help?”



# Changing Perceptions of Older Adults

- Mood and Cognitive Issues are NOT an expected outcome of aging
- Collaborative approach by including the older adult
- Self Awareness as the Health Care Professional of bias, feeling overwhelmed and hopeless interpretations of issues



“Yes I’m 100 years old but don’t tell anybody because as soon as you do they won’t think I know what I am talking about.”