

Depression**Alliance** Scotland

Depression in Later Years Research Findings



Why did we ask people about older people and Depression?

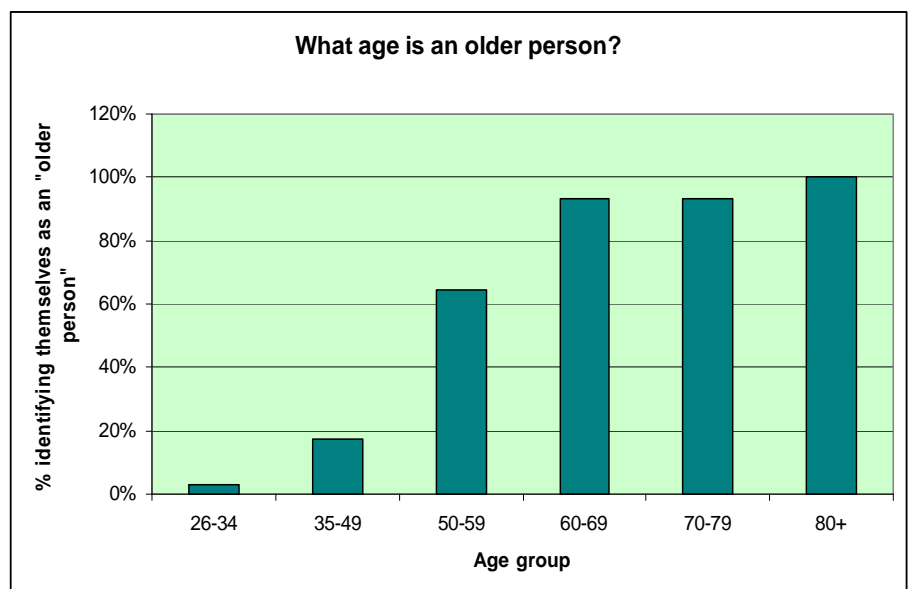
20% of people in Scotland are 50 years old or more¹ and as we live longer, do we stay mentally healthy? DAS were interested in what people in Scotland think about ageing and Depression; services and treatments; and; whether older adults are comfortable seeking help for Depression.

Who did we ask?

We surveyed 405 people of which 183 people identified themselves as an older person. 81% of the 183 described themselves as having experienced Depression. 65% of the people who responded were women and 35% men.

What age is an older person?

All of the people we surveyed who were 80yrs old and over identified themselves as an older person. The majority of those aged 60-79 also saw themselves as older. Interestingly a significant number of those aged 50-59 and a small number of those aged 35-49 also saw themselves as older!



What did people think?

We asked people whether they agreed or disagreed with 6 statements about older people and Depression:

- Only **8%** of people thought that Depression was a natural part of ageing.
- **78%** agreed that Depression in older people is treatable.
- An overwhelming **96%** thought that older people should have equal access to care and treatment for Depression
- **33%** of people thought older people were more likely to be affected by Depression than other age groups.

¹ Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland: Policy and Action Plan 2009-2011 (Scottish Government)

- **57%** agreed that that older people were more reluctant to seek help than other age groups.
- **57%** of people thought that older people were no more resilient to life challenges than other age groups.
- **43%** thought that older people were less likely to recognise when they were unwell with Depression.

What did older people themselves think?

People who identified themselves as an “older person” had similar views to the general population.

- Only **11%** of older people thought that Depression was a natural part of ageing.
- **70%** agreed that Depression in older people is treatable.
- An overwhelming **97%** thought that older people should have equal access to care and treatment for Depression
- **23%** thought older people were more likely to be affected by Depression than other age groups.
- **68%** agreed that that older people were more reluctant to seek help than other age groups.
- **54%** of people thought that older people were no more resilient to life challenges than other age groups.
- **44%** thought that older people were less likely to recognise when they were unwell with Depression.

Are the views of older and younger people different?

On the next page is a graph showing whether older (identify as an older person) and younger (do not identify as an older person) people agree or disagree with the questions we asked.

Older and younger people hold similar views for a number of the questions with a few significant differences. Younger people, for example do not see Depression as a natural part of ageing whereas older people are unsure about this.

Almost all older and younger people think that Depression in older people is treatable and that older people should have equal access to support and treatment.

Older and younger people's views

