



Neighbor News

Support Seniors on National Depression Screening Day

October 8th is National Depression Screening Day. Here's how you can help support seniors suffering from depression in your community.

By VNSNY, Community Contributor ✓

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Roughly 40 million adults in the U.S. struggle with depression or anxiety. Not to mention family, friends, and coworkers who may also be impacted. Especially this year, as stressors from COVID-19 are widespread, [National Depression Screening Day](#) is an opportunity to check in with older loved ones to see if they might be in need of help from a healthcare professional.

The not-for-profit [Visiting Nurse Service of New York](#) is one of several NYC organizations that offer help to seniors at no cost through the PEARLS (Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives) program, part of a citywide initiative from [New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#).

[The VNSNY PEARLS program](#) uses community screening efforts to identify seniors who may be struggling with depression. At-risk seniors receive an assessment and are eligible for short-term in-home mental health care that is intended to give them tools to recognize their depression and change their thinking. Treatment runs for six to eight sessions over a course of three to four months.

According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, PEARLS recipients were more likely to have at least a 50% greater reduction in depression symptoms, to achieve complete remission, and greater health-related quality of life improvements and a trend in decreased hospitalizations.

The VNSNY PEARLS program serves residents of Bronx, Queens and Manhattan.

For adults aged 55 and older who reside in the Bronx and are experiencing depression, VNSNY offers another no-cost in-home therapy program called the *Geriatric Mental Health Initiative*. This program is funded by *New York City Council*, and like PEARLS, VNSNY is one of several NYC agencies to provide the program.

If you know or are providing care to someone in these districts and would like to refer them to the VNSNY PEARLS program or Geriatric Mental Health Initiative for screening, visit www.VNSNY.org, or call: 718-536-3225 or 718-888-6884.