



You Don't Have to  
**Do Life Alone**

By Rachel Marsh

When things start to feel overwhelming, hopeless, and difficult to navigate, remember: you don't have to live like this forever. You can feel better—and NSSC can help. Our counseling and therapy program, staffed by licensed clinical social workers, can assist people with the vast array of difficulties life may bring.

## New Stages of Life Present New Challenges

There are many unpredictable obstacles that come with aging, and some older adults may feel overwhelmed with these unprecedented life events.

While aging has many rewarding aspects—like enhanced confidence, spirituality, and wisdom—it can also bring its own hardships. Our counselors serve clients 55 years and older, and have experience working with individuals who may be living with situations such as:

- Loneliness and isolation
- Loss and prolonged grief
- Stress and anxiety from caregiving
- Serious medical issues
- A major life change like retirement or marital status

## What does it look like?

You don't have to be in the middle of a crisis to seek professional counseling. Ongoing and chronic issues impacting day-to-day life are often addressed in our counseling office. Our licensed therapists utilize a goal-oriented approach that's both accessible and sustainable.

"We sit down with clients and figure out 'where do you want to be a year from now?'" said Terri McHugh, LCSW, Clinical Supervisor at NSSC. "And we set benchmarks to see how realistically close we can get to that goal."



For example, she explained, "If you're isolated and lonely, we treat that both practically and emotionally. Just being around other people isn't necessarily going to help. You have to feel a connection to those people. We work on the emotional side of therapy to help people get connected to the world."

## Additional Ways to Offer Support

In a consistent effort to find new ways to assist those in our community, NSSC recently started offering a program called Healthy IDEAS.

**Healthy IDEAS** (Identifying Depression & Empowering Activities for Seniors) is an evidence-based case management program that helps treat depression and anxiety in older adults and adults with disabilities using a uniquely empowering approach.

It follows five steps to educate clients about depression and gives them practical steps to address the symptoms.

"This is not a one-size-fits-all approach," Terri explained. "Every person is different, and, therefore, every treatment plan is too. We work with clients' strengths and abilities and from there, put them in touch with their own inner resources ... for example, talking to their doctor about medications and planning activities even if they don't feel like doing things. We help clients feel more like themselves again."

This program is offered at no cost to eligible older adults and adults with disabilities.

## Want to learn more?

For more information on counseling and therapy or Healthy IDEAS, contact Terri McHugh at [tmchugh@nssc.org](mailto:tmchugh@nssc.org) or 847.424.5672, or visit [nssc.org](http://nssc.org). ■