

# Older Adult Care & Cultural Competency



**St. Clair County  
Community Mental Health**

*Providing Opportunities for Health, Wellness, & Connection*

[www.scccmh.org](http://www.scccmh.org)



## Training Objectives

To gain a thorough understanding of common physical and medical needs experienced by older adults

To gain an increased sense of cultural competency in working with older adult populations

To gain a better understanding of the impact of aging on mental health

To increase knowledge of support services and community resources available

## Aging with Intellectual\Developmental Disabilities and Mental Illness



Tend to see more comorbidities and have a need for more support services and at a younger age



Advances in healthcare means a longer life expectancy

## Improved life expectancies

- Average Lifespan of Individuals with Down Syndrome:
  - 1980- 35 years old (Bittles & Glasson, 2004 as cited in Dolan et al., 2019)
  - 2002- mid 50s (Bittles et al., 2002 as cited in Heller, n.d.)
- Those with a mild to moderate Intellectual Disability have a life expectancy comparable to the general population
- The number of individuals with ID/DD ages 60 and up are projected to nearly double by 2030 (Heller, n.d.)
- Average Lifespan of Individuals with Mental Illnesses (ranging in severity from mild to severe):
  - Prior to 2001- 59 years old
  - 2001-2010- 64 years old
  - After 2010- 72 years old (Kwun et al., 2023)

# Providing Care to a Diverse Older Population

- **Geographic and cultural background**
  - Negative stigma associated with mental health diagnoses and treatment in years past
  - May believe that seeking help is a sign of weakness (Stubbe, 2021)
- **Race and Ethnicity**
  - May have lived through segregation and were subject to discrimination
- **Age**
  - Generational differences
  - Might believe younger people can't relate to or help them (Stubbe, 2021)
- **Gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation**
  - May struggle to be open about sexuality due to past stigma
- **Preferred language**
- **Religious values**
  - May be stronger amongst older adults
- **Family traditions**
  - Male/female roles
- **Education**
- **Socioeconomic background**
- **Cognitive, sensory, and physical abilities**

(National Institute on Aging, 2023)

\* Recognizing and appreciating diversity is an essential part of patient care. An individual's culture and background will affect whether and where they seek healthcare, their understanding of medical information, and how they make healthcare decisions. (National Institute on Aging, 2023)

## Ageism

- Ageism- prejudice against older adults
- Interpersonal Ageism- how individuals treat each other based on age
- Institutional Ageism- social norms, laws, and policies that are unfair to older adults
- Self Directed Ageism- individuals view themselves negatively based on their own age

## Implicit Bias Toward Older Adults

- **Examples:**

- Frail, vulnerable, dependent, a burden
- Not valuable to society
- Can't drive well
- Don't understand technology
- Can't remember things
- Slow moving

- **Ageism and implicit bias can:**

- lead to age based discrimination
- contribute to cognitive decline and depression
- be a factor in earlier death
- influence poorer physical health
- be associated with lower quality of life
- lead to social isolation/loneliness (Stubbe, 2021)

## Common Medical Issues for Older Adults

Increased falls

Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)

Dementia

Comorbidities

Multiple doctors

Increase in prescribed medication/medication changes

\* Integrated healthcare is essential! \*

## Overall Issues for the Aging

Complicated healthcare system

Technology advancing and can't keep up

Safety in the home

Loss of independence

- Living independently
- Meeting activities of daily living
- Driving
- Needing support with decision making/money management

## Overall Issues for the Aging

- Increased memory issues and confusion
- Lack of support systems
- Isolation
- Roles change with significant other- one may become caregiver for the other
- Role reversal with children

\*We take for granted everything we can do independently.

ISSUES OFTEN LEAD TO GRIEF AND LOSS...



## Grief & Loss

Grief and loss does not only relate to death and dying. It can be a loss of any kind.

Loss of home

Loss of ability to care for self

Loss of ability to engage in activities they once enjoyed

Loss of family and friends due to everyone aging

Loss of ability to engage in activities with those who they enjoy

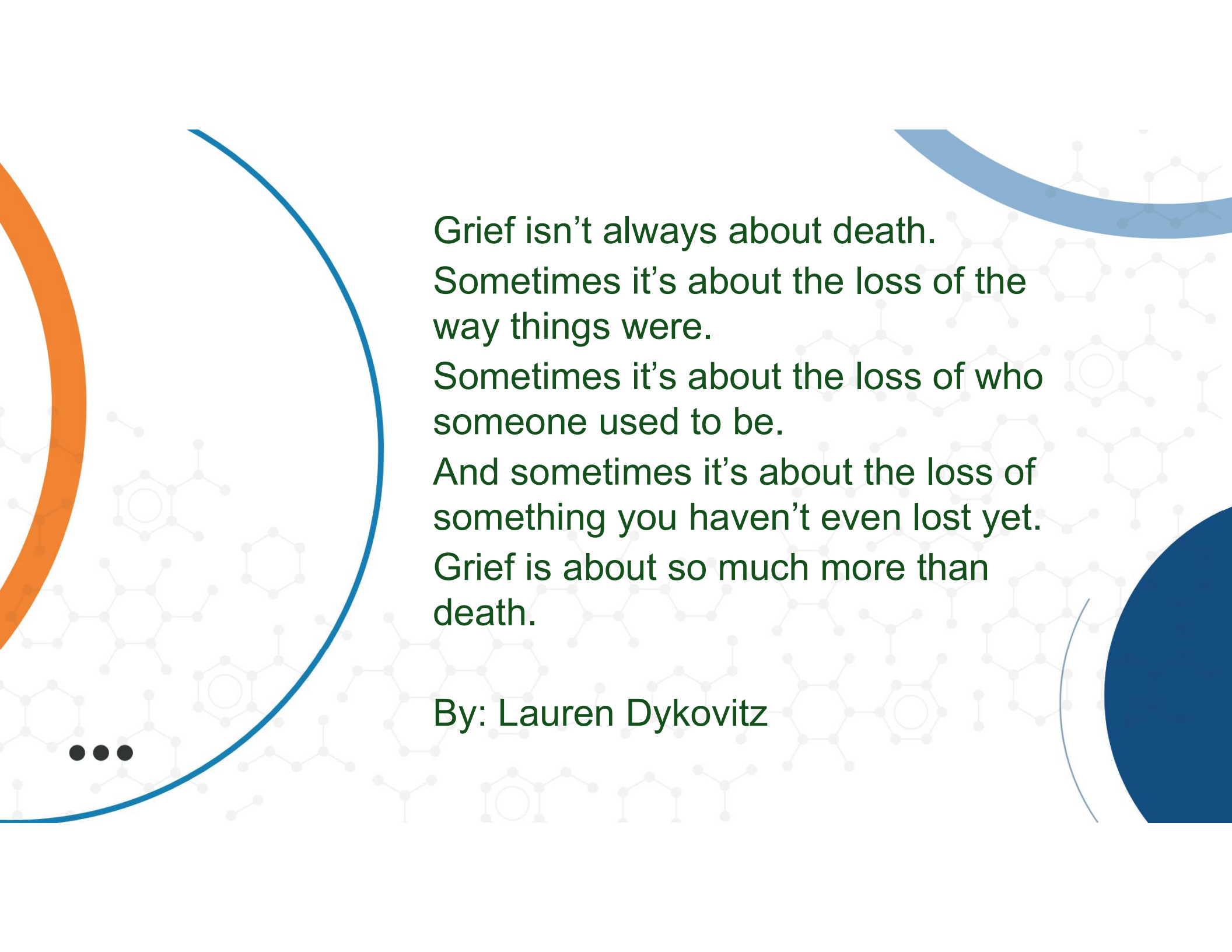
Loss of pets

Loss of work due to retirement/inability to work

Loss of purpose

Loss of youth

We should work to be in tune with and identify issues related to grief and loss, provide validation and support, and provide as much choice as possible.

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Grief isn't always about death.  
Sometimes it's about the loss of the  
way things were.  
Sometimes it's about the loss of who  
someone used to be.  
And sometimes it's about the loss of  
something you haven't even lost yet.  
Grief is about so much more than  
death.

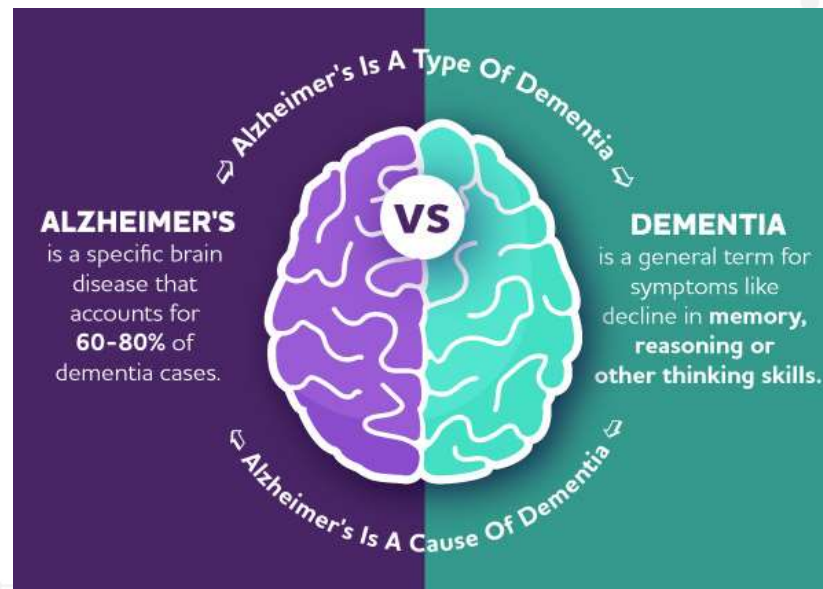
By: Lauren Dykovitz

# Guardianship/ Medical Durable Power of Attorney

- Both Guardianship and Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) give legal authority to make decisions on behalf of an individual.
- **Durable Power of Attorney** must be established while the person is competent to make decisions. The individual designates who they would like their DPOA to be.
  - DPOA paperwork designates that a DPOA becomes activated only after two physicians have deemed an individual to be incompetent to make informed decisions.
  - For mental health decisions, the DPOA paperwork completed must have language to state that the designated DPOA has authority to make mental health decisions for the individual or CMH cannot honor the appointed DPOA. A general Medical DPOA does not cover mental health decisions.
- **Guardianship** is established after an individual is designated to be incapacitated.
  - 2 Guardianship types:
    - For individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities
    - For individuals who are incapacitated adults- individuals who are elderly, mentally ill, unable due to medical reasons, etc.

\* Legal Aid provides free legal services to individuals who are low income and over the age of 60

# Dementia



- Over 100 types of dementia
- Common Types
  - Alzheimer's Disease
  - Vascular Dementia
  - Dementia with Lewy Bodies
  - Frontotemporal Dementia

## Dementia

Diagnosed by  
physician/neurologist

Type matters as type  
impacts presenting  
symptoms and treatment

Individuals with ID/DD or  
MI are more likely to  
develop dementia and at a  
younger age

Individuals with Down  
Syndrome are very likely to  
develop dementia

- 30% of those in their 50s
- 50% of those in their 60s  
(Alzheimer's Association, 2022)

# Complications with Dementia Diagnosing



Hearing Loss



Medications



ID/DD Diagnosis



Schizophrenia



\* History is so important in determining a dementia diagnosis vs a mental health diagnosis



\* When treating individuals with both dementia and an ID/DD/MI diagnosis it can be difficult to determine if behavior is resulting from dementia or the preexisting ID/DD/MI diagnosis



## Dementia Resources

- **Programs**
  - Life Skills Memory Care
  - Starpath through Council on Aging
- **Alzheimer's Association**
  - Can help develop activity and behavior plans for individuals
- **Dementia and Alzheimer's Association of St. Clair County**
  - Can assist with payment for respite services to families
- **Nursing Facilities with Dementia Units**
  - Marwood Nursing and Rehab
  - Medilodge of Port Huron
  - Medilodge of Yale
  - Medilodge of St. Clair

# Medical Resources

## Medications

- Pharmacies who provide medication packaging (free unless listed otherwise)
- Edhart's (\$20/month fee)
- VG's Pharmacy
- Timely Meds
- Genoa
- Blue Water Pharmacy
- Port Huron Pharmacy
- Wadhams Pharmacy

## Pharmacies who provide medication delivery/mail delivery (free unless listed otherwise)

- Kroger (\$5.99 fee)
- Ehardt's (\$4 fee)
- Port Huron Pharmacy
- Blue Water Pharmacy
- Wadhams Pharmacy (\$3 fee)
- CVS
- Meijer
- Walmart
- Sam's Club
- Walgreen's

## Benevolent Prescription Drug Assistance Program

Offered through Council on Aging  
Can provide some free prescription drugs to seniors who spend more than 20% of their income on prescriptions

## Medical Supplies

- United Way Loan Closet (810-985-8169 ext. 3)
- Wheelchairs
- Shower chairs
- Crutches
- Walkers
- Disposable adult brief
- Blue incontinence pads
- Gauze

## Transportation

### Medicaid

- Some plans provide transportation to medical appointments

### Council on Aging (for ages 60 and older)

- Can provide Monday-Friday transportation for medical appointments, other appointments, or shopping
- No cost
- Wheelchair accessible

# St. Clair County Council on Aging

- For individuals ages 60 and up
- Community Liaisons assist with providing resources and coordinating services
- Activity Centers in Port Huron, Marine City, Yale, and Capac
- Meals on Wheels and other Nutrition Programs (Individual gives donation for meals, if able)
- Friendly Visitors and Callers (Will call daily or spend an hour per week visiting)

## **In Home Services**

Personal Care – ADL support

Homemakers- light housekeeping

Chore Workers- larger cleaning jobs

Home Repair- minor home repairs/wheelchair ramps

\* In home services are mostly paid by donation. Individual is responsible for cost of supplies for home repairs.

## **Vial of Life**

Identifying and medical information that is stored in the individual's refrigerator that can be accessed by EMS in the event of an emergency

## **Help Home Personal ID**

Provides identifying bracelets for individuals with dementia

## **Hearing and Vision**

Provides assistance with the cost of hearing exams and aids and eye exams and eyeglasses

## **Property Tax Credit/Home Heating Credit**

## Age Ways (formerly Area Agency on Aging 1-B)

### **MI Choice Medicaid Waiver Program**

- Program that provides in-home or community based services to help individuals maintain in their home
- Contract with provided caregivers or pay family members or friends to provide daily living or personal care activities

### **Community Living Program**

- Not a Medicaid program, uses a sliding fee scale
- Provides in-home support with daily living and personal care needs

### **Long Term Care Ombudsman Program**

- Provides advocacy services for those in nursing homes, homes for the aged, and AFC homes

## MDHHS Chore Services/Home Help

- Individual must qualify for Medicaid.
- MDHHS will complete an assessment to determine the level of personal care/daily living needs
- Will provide payment to a worker to meet those needs

## Community Living Supports/Respite

- Authorized through CMH
- CLS: Skill building services to assist the individual in their home or community.
- Respite: Intended to be provided on a short term basis as an occasional break for a caregiver to maintain the least restrictive setting/services
- Can be provided through a contract agency or Self Directed arrangement

## Home Health Care

- For individuals living at home with an acute issue, making additional support necessary  
Examples: recent fall, hospitalization, uncontrolled diabetes, wounds
- Services can include: nursing, a home health aide, physical therapy, and/or occupational therapy
- Services are time limited

# Palliative Care & Hospice

## Palliative Care

- For individuals who have chronic illnesses or declining health, but do not meet criteria for hospice
- Focuses on easing pain and discomfort, to promote highest quality of life possible.
- Can help individuals prepare and plan as health declines

## Hospice

- For individuals who have a terminal illness or declining health and are believed to have 6 months or less to live
- Person cannot receive medical treatments to cure diseases/illnesses, but can receive treatments that would help maintain their comfort
- Can discontinue services if status improves or if individual wants to pursue alternative medical treatment
- Can be provided in private homes, group homes, nursing homes, or inpatient units

## Senior Living

### Senior Apartments

- Many in the area that are income based
- Some have pull cords available in apartments in case of emergency

### Assisted Living

- Many in the area, but most are private pay, making them unaffordable for low income individuals
- Lake Huron Woods
  - currently has a few income based apartments
  - over 40 new income based apartments opening early in 2025

## PACE

- For individuals ages 55 and older who have Medicaid
- Purpose is to provide support to individuals at home and at the PACE center to keep individuals in the least restrictive setting possible and to prevent need for nursing home placement
- Provide in home services and services at the PACE center including: housekeeping, laundry, medications, assistance with personal care activities, recreational activities, various therapies, primary care, nursing services, transportation, and support at medical appointments.
- When a CMH recipient opens to PACE, CMH becomes a contract provider and all CMH services must be authorized and approved by PACE.

## Nursing Homes

- 5 in county nursing homes: Marwood Nursing and Rehab, Regency on the Lake, Medilodge of Port Huron, Medilodge of St. Clair, and Medilodge of Yale
- Offer short term rehab and long term options
- Most restrictive setting

## OBRA

Purpose is to ensure individuals are being appropriately placed in the nursing home setting and to ensure individuals with an ID/DD/MI diagnosis are getting needed mental health services in the nursing home

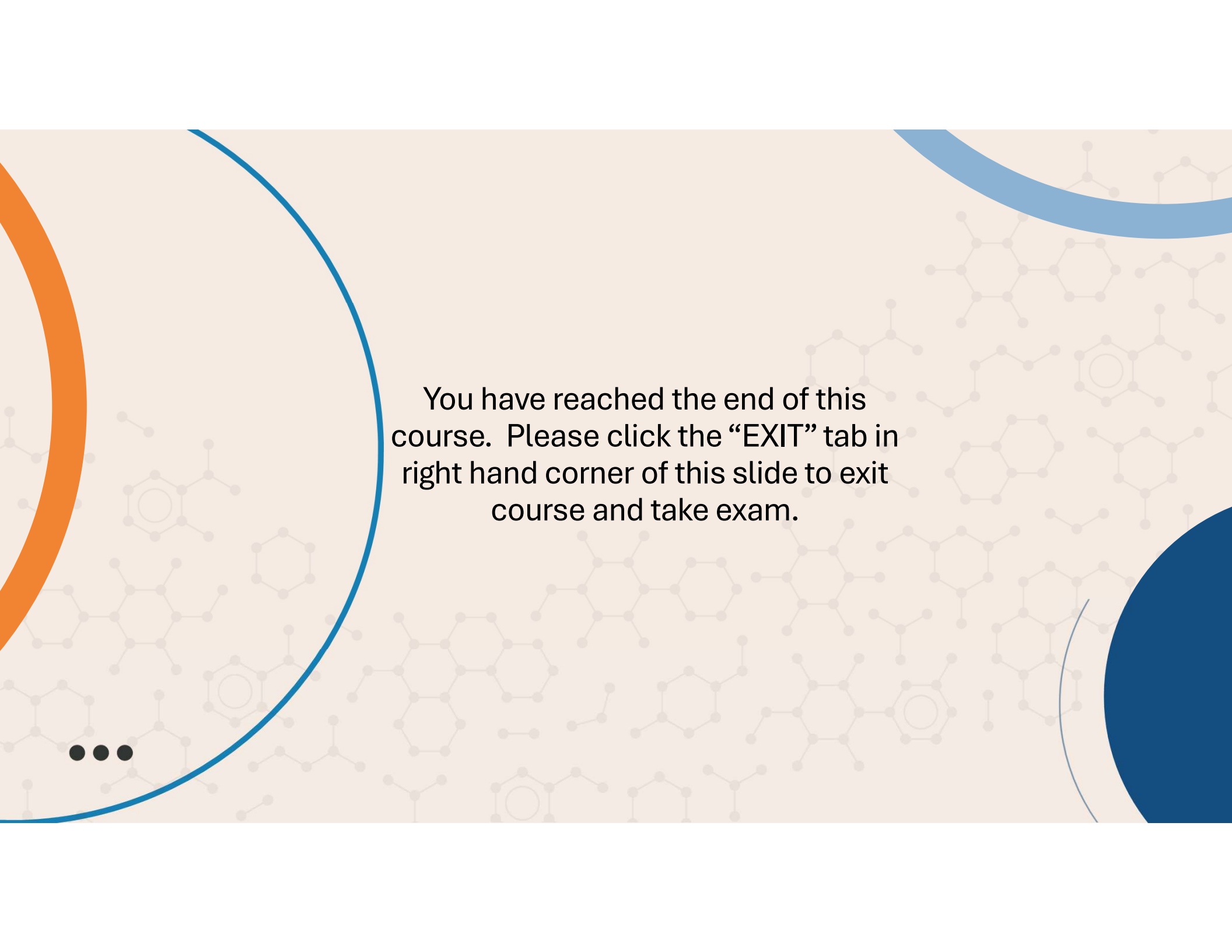
Can provide education on the admission process for placing an individual in the nursing home and offer consultation related to the appropriateness of a placement

OBRA PASARR completes assessments initially and annually on all individuals with an MI/ID diagnosis

OBRA Active Treatment provides ongoing nursing home monitoring and/or individual therapy services

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