

Friends Foundation for the Aging, New Grant Proposal Form

Date:

September 12, 2024

Organization:

LiveWell Foundation (www.livewell-foundation.org)

TIN & Formal organization name:

EIN# 81-4711726 (State of PA); LiveWell Foundation

Contact name, phone, email:

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Amount requested:

\$18,920

Project title:

LiveWell Seniors

Summary Description (maximum 25 words):

LiveWell Seniors is a free and effective, peer-led educational-based behavioral health program that empowers seniors with depression with the skills and support they need to live well.

1. What is the problem you have identified?

Major Depressive Disorder is a leading cause of disability nationwide, and is associated with greater functional impairment and higher societal costs than any other chronic health problem. According to the Center for Disease Control, Major Depressive Disorder is the most prevalent mental health problem among older adults (65+), and causes "significant distress and suffering." Both physical conditions (such as stroke, diabetes, cancer, dementia, chronic pain, and poor sleep) and emotional/social conditions (such as loneliness and social isolation) directly increase the risk of depression among the elderly; and the presence of depressive disorders often adversely affects the course and complicates the treatment of other health problems (NIMH).

Despite the high prevalence of seniors affected, depressive disorders are vastly untreated among older adults, with millions of seniors unable to get the mental health support they desperately want and need. Mental Health America (MHA) reports that less than 3% of people aged 65+ receive treatment from mental health professionals, and primary care physicians accurately recognize less than one half of patients with depression. In fact, untreated depression is the leading cause of suicide in elderly Americans. Comprising only 13% of the U.S. population, individuals aged 65 and older account for 20% of all suicide deaths, with nearly six times the average suicide rate for older males. Various factors contribute to the crisis of untreated depression among seniors including: a lack of affordable treatment options; expensive and exclusionary insurance networks; a critical shortage of mental health providers; cultural stigma; and misperceptions of the aging process (58% of seniors falsely believe it is "normal" for people to get depressed as they grow older, MHA).

2. What is the solution you propose to address the problem?

With both the private and public health systems failing to meet the needs of millions of elderly Americans, we're putting evidence-based depression treatment directly into the hands of seniors themselves. LiveWell Seniors is a one-of a kind psychosocial educational behavioral health program run by and for seniors with lived experience of depression and resilience that offers.

Recommended by leading mental health professions, the virtual LiveWell Senior support group is:

- FREE and easily accessible to anyone with an internet connection: no insurance, diagnosis, referral or registration required;
- Led by trained volunteer senior peers from diverse backgrounds with their own lived experience of depression and resilience; and
- Follow an innovative, GUIDED SELF-CARE behavioral health curriculum that teaches people strategies for reducing their own symptoms and relapses of depression, and for living more connected, meaningful, and productive lives.

Despite research that shows peer-led interventions are a cost-effective way to reach a wide and diverse population in need, peer support for depression still barely exists-- posing a big gap in our nation's behavioral health landscape. Furthermore, not only are peer-led interventions proven to be more effective than psychotherapy for the depression recovery process -- offering greater levels of self-efficacy, empowerment, engagement, and quality of life (Bellamy, 2017), but our communal approach to depression education, treatment, and prevention also:

- Increases access to depression support for a wide and diverse group of seniors;
- Builds a sustainable social infrastructure in which seniors can access quality mental health services at no cost (moving away from the ineffective and inequitable fee-for-service model);
- Fosters healthy lives through education and self-empowerment;
- Provides opportunities for seniors to get emotional support from their peers who are sensitive to the aging process and shared life experiences;
- Combats the "epidemic of loneliness" that contributes to the rates of depression and to worsening individual symptoms by creating a supportive peer community;
- Challenges the stigma that prevents too many seniors from getting the support they need by creating opportunities for people with depression to share their stories of resilience and living well; and
- Helps to save lives.

In other words, while not a Quaker organization, our Philadelphia-based grassroots nonprofit shares many of the Friends Foundation of the Aging's' core principles, including: service to diverse populations; potential to create change, leveraging resources, collaboration, and engagement of participants (peers).

Furthermore, the evidence is in that the LiveWell Seniors (LWS) program is helping to transform lives. As part of our annual evaluation process in 2023, in an anonymous online survey:

- 93% of participants reported that LWS: "Taught me skills to better manage my moods."
- 92% of participants reported that LWS: "Helps me to feel more hopeful about managing my own depression."
- 78% of participants reported that LWS: "Makes me feel more connected to others."
- 74% of participants reported that "Because of LWS, my depression symptoms decreased or went away."

3. What actions will you take?

LiveWell Seniors Project Goals:

- Provide sustainable and equitable mental health support to a wide and diverse population of seniors in need through our free and effective, educational-based depression support groups.
- Create unique leadership opportunities for seniors by training them to lead LiveWell's psychosocial program for their peers, and by participating in "continuing education" of trauma-informed peer-led interventions three times per year with the rest of the LiveWell Foundation peers (ages 14+).
- Have a minimum of 1,000 logins to our weekly, virtual LiveWell Senior Support Group in a one-year period.
- Conduct a yearly program evaluation with a reputable third-party, implement findings to improve our programs and services, and share evaluation results with all stakeholders
- At least 50% of program participants ages 65+ will report that LiveWell: 1) gave them skills to better manage their own moods; 2) helped them feel more hopeful about managing their own depression; 3) helped them feel more connected to others; and 4) helped them to decrease symptoms or relapses of depression.

Describe the population to be served.

The LiveWell Seniors Program is open to any senior (age 65+) who self-identifies as needing direct support for better managing their moods, decreasing symptoms and relapses of depression, and/or needing peer connection for better mental health outcomes.

Based on an annual evaluation process in 2023, of the 300 seniors who logged into our group for free and effective depression support more than 1,000 times, 30% were from the Philadelphia region, 60% from the across the country, and 10% international. Of the U.S. attendees, they represented a diverse population in need: 19% Black, 11% Multiple Race, 8% Asian, 5% Hispanic (any race), and 58% White.

Are there partners/collaborators for implementation or funding? Has the solution been tried by other organizations?

Our Philadelphia-based grassroots nonprofit organization is currently funded by local individual donors and through foundational support.

While the LiveWell Seniors Program has not yet been tried by other organizations. However, our innovative model – a volunteer-run, participant/peer-led behavioral health program curriculum uniquely designed to empower seniors with depression to live well and age well – presents an unique opportunity for sustainable replication as we continue to grow— both with more internal weekly support groups, and by collaborating with other mission-driven community partners.

How will you know your actions are having an impact? How will you measure outputs and outcomes?

Our annual program evaluation is spearheaded by Dr. Emily Goldmann, mental health epidemiologist at Boston University School of Public Health.

To measure the impact of our program, participants are asked complete an online anonymous survey (co-designed by Stefanie Glick, the creator of the LiveWell Program curricula, Dr. Emily Goldmann, and Aaron T. Beck, the “founder” of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy). The survey is designed to measure coping skill development, feelings of hopefulness about managing one’s own depression (agency); feeling connected and/or supported by others; and impact of program to decrease depression symptoms.

Program Budget

Please see below.

Narrative: As one of five educational-based psychosocial behavioral health depression support programs currently offered by our foundation (including teens, adults, adults w/co-occurring depression and substance use, and physicians), the LiveWell Seniors Program budget represents 1/5th (or 20%) of our total program operating costs.

50% of the LiveWell Seniors program budget (cash needed) has recently been offered by a local private donor; while we are asking for the other 50% as part of this grant proposal.

IRS determination letter.

Attached.

LIVEWELL SENIORS – ANNUAL PROGRAM BUDGET

Total Budget = 20% of Total LiveWell Foundation direct-service program offerings
 50% of Seniors Program budget (cash needed) = individual donor contribution
 50% of Seniors Program budget (cash needed) = grant proposal request

Personnel & Consultants (20% of operating)	Value	Cash Needed	Grant Request
ED / Program Manager (FTE)	20,000	20,000	10,000
Payroll Taxes (7.65%)	1,244	250	
Benefits,	1,200	600	
Volunteer Coordinator (Consultant)	7,200	7,200	3,600
Evaluation Consultant (20%)	3,700	3,700	925
Support Group Peer Facilitators (In-kind hours)	22,000	0	0
Website maintenance	1,200	1,200	600
Accountant	500	500	250
Bookkeeper	750	750	375
Non-Personnel Expenses (20% of operating)			
Rent	\$0	\$0	0
Office Supplies	100	100	50
Communications	900	900	450
Digital Platform	1,200	1,200	600
Insurance	625	625	300
Website Hosting	125	125	75
QuickBooks	90	90	45
Advertising (participant recruitment)	600	600	300
Program Budget	61,343	37,840	18,920