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Father's Day Depression Hits Home: Senior Suicide on the Rise

With elderly suicides increasing because of depression among seniors, one local family "bought" their dad a friend and it saved his life

May 27, 2008 - This Father's Day, millions of Americans will watch their once active, happy dads sit around and complain, with no energy or zest for life and no hope in sight. It's called *elderly depression* and too often it goes untreated, which has now led to an overall increase in elderly suicides across the country.

90 year old, Lou Neckar became despondent when his wife of 68 years died. His daughters watched him deteriorate and basically stop all daily functioning. "We didn't know what to do with dad," says Lou's 50 year old daughter Susan. "He was grumpy. He didn't want to go to restaurants or garage sales. He couldn't sleep. So we brought in a 'friend' that could stay with him, and it has completely changed his life."

This **Father's Day**, millions of Americans will watch their elderly loved ones, like Lou, slip into depression, but may not even recognize the signs.

- **Late life depression affects about 65 million Americans age 65 and older, but only one in ten receives treatment.**
- **Elderly Depression is often misdiagnosed by family members and doctors. 3 out of 4 seniors who commit suicide visit their primary care physician in the month prior to killing themselves so doctors need to recognize mental as well as physical health issues. Children often misread depression by saying "Good ol' dad is slowing down."**
- **Older adults with depression are more likely to commit suicide than younger people with depression. People age 65 and older account for 19% of all suicides. The overall U.S. suicide rate is 11 per 100,000. For folks 65 and older, the figure rises to 14 per 100,000.**
- **Factors that increase the risk of elderly depression include being unmarried, stressful life events and lack of a supportive social network.**

Lou refused to go into a nursing home, so Susan called on **Senior Helpers**, a company that provides in-home personal assistance for seniors so they can maintain their independence, to create a social network for her dad. Lou's **Senior Helpers'** caregiver, Galen, is now his best friend. Galen's job is to take Lou out three times a week. They visit the horse track, Lou's favorite restaurants, go to movies and flea markets. Lou even sold Galen his own Cadillac, so Galen could drive him around in style.

“Hiring a friend for my dad was the best medicine ever,” says Susan. “He’s back to himself again and he gets to stay in his own home where he keeps his self-esteem and his memories.”

Tell an EMOTIONAL FATHER’S DAY STORY like this with concrete solutions. We can provide:

- Interviews/photos/b-roll with families in your city, struggling with depressed dads
- Interviews with elderly care experts who can talk about depression in seniors, how to recognize it and stop it before it’s too late
- Alarming studies about elderly suicide, plus ways to recognize symptoms.

RISK FACTORS FOR DEPRESSION IN THE ELDERLY:

- **Living alone, social isolation**
- **Certain medicines or combination of medicines**
- **Damage to body image (from amputation, cancer surgery or heart attack)**
- **Substance abuse**
- **Access to firearms (Guns are the most common method of suicide , used by 74% men and 31% of women)**
- **Presence of chronic or severe pain**
- **Fear of death**
- **Family history of major depressive disorder**
- **Recent bereavement**

This story touches a huge portion of your readers/listeners/viewers this Father’s Day. We’ll develop the story for you and set up all interviews and photo/b-roll opportunities right in your city.

Readers/listeners/viewers in your area do not have to feel helpless anymore. We can educate them about solutions to make their lives easier and more peaceful this Father’s Day.

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About Senior Helpers

Senior Helpers connects professional caregivers with seniors who wish to live at home as opposed to a nursing or assisted living facility. Based in Baltimore, Maryland, Senior Helpers strives to be the leading companion and personal care provider that offers dependable and affordable care.

www.seniorhelpers.com