

***Behavioral health is important at every stage of life and there is  
no age-limit on recovery***

Did you know that depression is NOT a normal part of aging, and neither is dementia? Or that older adults face unique and high risks of opioid overdose? Or perhaps that older adults make up a significant portion of the caregiving infrastructure and are also the fastest-growing segment of the workforce?

The **Behavioral Health Forum on Aging** is dedicated to raising awareness about older adult behavioral health—essentially, health and well-being as we age. Our goal is to help usher in an age-informed standard and system of care. This statewide, multi-stakeholder forum is supported by **Aging Services** at the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and is chaired by national expert and advocate Karen Orsi.

We are guided by the vision that all Oklahomans have an opportunity to live and age with behavioral health, which includes physical health, well-being, social connection, and purpose. To achieve this vision, it's essential to raise awareness about aging, behavioral health, and how these intersect, both among providers and the public. An important part of this effort is the adoption of an **age-informed** approach to care, services, and business practices.

An **age-informed approach** is based on research and the evolving concept of aging. It focuses on the unique lived experiences, strengths, and contributions of older adults, as well as addressing needs. This approach reframes aging, recognizing it as a process that includes growth, purpose, and well-being.

We are honored to partner with **Aging Our Way**, Oklahoma's Multi-Sector Plan on Aging. Our collaboration aligns with many of the goals, including Social Connection and Culture Change and Education, but particularly **Wellness**. One of the key pathways of the Wellness goal is to "support the implementation of the Older Adult Behavioral Health State Plan through partnership with the Behavioral Health Forum on Aging."

A major step forward in enhancing awareness and promoting the age-informed approach is the Forum's launch of the [Age-Informed Trainings & Resources for Professionals, Individuals, & Families](#) online resource. This site provides direct access to Oklahoma's Older Adult Behavioral Health State Plan and offers a wealth of trainings and resources focused on older adult behavioral health.

The site is designed for ease of use, with sections tailored specifically to providers and individuals and families. It includes helpful resources such as fact sheets, podcasts, articles, language and imagery guides, and Age-Informed **988** resources.

We invite you to explore this new resource today, and please help us spread the word by sharing it with others!