

# Treating mental health at Baker Senior Center Naples

**Author:** Amy Oshier **Writer:** Rachel Murphy

**Published:** June 1, 2023 **Updated:** June 5, 2023



HEALTH AND MEDICAL

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH FOR SENIORS

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**WINK**

Isolation, loneliness and grief are a growing problem in the older population that often leads to depression.

To give people another layer of support, the Baker Senior Center Naples is adding mental health caseworkers.

Cognitive therapy is one of the wellness programs offered at the Baker Senior Center Naples. When they built this new building, Jaclynn Faffer, president and CEO, recognized the need for mental health services.

“It’s to help people alleviate the isolation and loneliness that seniors too often experience,” Faffer said.

Beverly can attest to that. She has been left with lots of time on her hands after her husband passed away last year.

Beverly showed her rings to WINK News. “This was the last gift Jeffrey bought me for our 50th wedding anniversary.”

They were married for 53 years, more than half her life. The grief and loss was crippling.

“I went into a bad depression, and my daughter, my daughters were very concerned for me,” Beverly said.

Beverly is one of the 40 clients who jumped at the chance to work with a counselor focused on geriatric mental health.

“And she threw me a lifeline and brought me back to civilization, and I’m reinventing myself,” Beverly said, “and a year ago, I would never even think about talking to anybody without falling apart.”

“Years ago, we thought it was just a feeling and emotion,” Faffer said, “but now there is extensive research indicating that it can affect heart disease, certainly cognitive functioning, it even can affect the inflammatory system, so science has now started to take it very seriously.”

They take it seriously at the Baker Senior Center Naples, recognizing that in every life, dark clouds roll in.