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SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS  
COMMUNICATIONS

# NEWS

CONTACT: SEDGWICK COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS 316-660-9370 FAX: 316-383-7509

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:**

Amanda Matthews  
Kristi Zukovich  
316-660-9370

**THE MAGIC OF LAUGHTER**

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – “Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine.” - Lord Byron.

In an effort to promote positive aging and encourage positive mental wellness for adults age 55 and older and professionals working with older adults in Sedgwick County, the Department on Aging and the Aging and Wellness Coalition of Sedgwick County will host “The Magic of Laughter” - a program to promote quality of life from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on October 10 at American Red Cross, 1900 E. Douglas, Wichita.

“The Magic of Laughter” will be presented by Judy Young of Laughter Links. She will discuss the benefits of laughter, including how it stimulates the brain, heart, circulatory and immune systems, plus how laughter generates the feel good chemicals in the body. Adults age 55 and older and caregivers of older adults are invited to this fun and educational program that also will touch on the warning signs and steps to take if depression is a concern.

Although laughter alone cannot relieve depression it encourages the spirit and provides healing.

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Many people believe depression is a normal part of aging, therefore, it often goes overlooked or untreated. Despite its prevalence among older adults, depression is not a normal part of aging. Older adults may experience a variety of losses in later life including changes in health status or loss of a loved one; the majority of seniors cope with these losses without becoming clinically depressed. But, if a depressed mood lingers for a long period of time, it may be clinical depression. Twenty-five percent of older adults suffer from clinical depression, and the symptoms of depression are often missed when they coincide with other medical conditions of later life.

### **Learn to Recognize the Signs and Symptoms of Depression**

- Feeling sad or irritable throughout the day for an extended period
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Unplanned change in weight or appetite
- Changes in normal sleep patterns (difficulty falling asleep, interrupted sleep, early morning awakening or increase in sleep)
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feeling worthless, hopeless or unreasonably guilty
- Inability to concentrate, remember things or make decisions
- Restlessness or decreased activity
- Complaints of physical aches and pains for which no medical causes can be found
- Recurrent thoughts of suicide or death (not just fear of dying)

Sedgwick County Department on Aging is here to support older adults and caregivers by providing answers and options. For information on aging call 660-5120 or (800)367-7298 or visit us online at [www.sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org).

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