

Project HOPEFUL (Helping Older PErsons Find Useful Links)

- Project Hopeful goal: to improve WISH outcomes (i.e., wellbeing, decreased food insecurity, socialization, and health) among older adults by improving, scaling up, and evaluating a novel approach to integrating mental health services within the home-delivered meal and congregate meal contexts through two randomized control trials.
- Project Hopeful is a collaboration between university researchers and Georgia and North Carolina's state division of aging services to conduct a 5-year research project to evaluate the impact of senior nutrition programs on health outcomes of older adults.
- Previous grants: 1st grant focused on training staff in aging network in ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and tracking suicide interventions that took place by home delivered meal providers and older adult clients. 2nd grant was focused on expanding social connections to isolated individuals with aging network supports.
- Current grant (3rd ACL grant)
 - Part 1 (Georgia): Shifting from “mental health outcomes” to “implementation science outcomes. Replication of the 8 week phone based “caring contacts” intervention, however instead of it being university led, it will be led by members of the aging network in one AAA in Georgia, while there will be other members of the aging network (new) as part of a “learning collaborative” learning how to do this 8 week program, and getting support, supervision, etc., fidelity of this. The project is assessing “implementation outcomes” of the 8 week phone social support program- studying what is working, what isn't, what barriers exist, what needs there are for sustainability, etc.
 - Part 2 (North Carolina): Develop and pilot test mental health and wellness group program (BE WELL) that would focus on CM (congregate meal) sites within Senior Centers. This intervention is currently being developed (augmenting the 8 week program from an “individual” to “group” context).
 - Part 3 (North Carolina): Operationalize mental health support and look for ways to make this long-term sustainable part of what the aging network does (mental health coordinators)- strengthen the bridge between the aging network and community health resources
- Once the BE WELL program has been developed will be will looking for congregate meal locations/Senior Centers who would be interested in piloting a novel program (Fall/Winter 2024)