

The RAMble Report - February 2022

Associate professor and licensed clinical psychologist Rashelle Hayes, Ph.D., spoke to the RAMble participants on a brisk Saturday morning on February 19. Her topic was depression and anxiety among older adults, with a goal of helping listeners understand how physical activity – like walking at the RAMble – helps protect against depression.

A cardinal symptom of depression is sadness for at least two weeks, however, she stressed this may be different for older adults – those over the age of 65. Their depression may include fatigue, sleep disturbances, sometimes concentration or memory concerns, and feeling sluggish, instead of sadness. Depression onset, regardless of age, is influenced by multiple factors, Hayes stated.

Risk factors for older adults include lack of social engagement, lack of support, lack of physical activity, poor sleep, constant thinking about a bothersome topic (rumination), housing instability, bereavement and financial worries. Hayes suggested visiting a therapist to learn positive reappraisal, a technique to change the way one looks at things and adding physical activity.

Treatment for depression, she said, needs to be taken seriously, and talk therapy, medication and activity all make a difference. Hayes joined us for our warm up stretches and walk following her presentation.

