

“Ask an Expert” with Patrick Brodigan, BS, QMHP-C



Patrick Brodigan is a Qualified Mental Health Professional – Certified, with a bachelor’s degree in Sociology from Oregon State University. Patrick has 37 years of continuous work in the mental health field, with a focus on adults. For the last 33 years he has worked in multiple positions with Marion County Health & Human Services, Adult Behavioral Health.

Patrick lives with his wonderful wife of 38 years in Salem. They have a grown son who is successful in his own career. Patrick brings equilibrium to his life through; bicycle commuting, living simply, cooking, reading books, listening to music, watching old movies with his wife, hiking, fitness, and nutrition.

Question 1. What do you do at Marion County Health and Human Services?

Response:

I work for Marion County Health and Human services as part of the statewide Older Adult Behavioral Health Initiative. I’m one of 24 specialists across the state. I represent Marion County and that role has three main core tasks involved that is replicated with every specialist across the state. Those tasks are collaborating and planning with community stakeholders to address systems gaps that impact older adults and people with disabilities that want to access mental health services; complex consultations which is a free service that we provide that can involve a variety of topics like access to housing or referral to a higher level of care; and the third core task is workforce development and community education. This has been going on since 2015 and it’s exciting!

Question 2.

Older Americans Month is every May and this years’ theme is Age My Way, an opportunity for all of us to explore the many ways older adults can remain in and be involved with their communities.

What are some things we can do to help older adults thrive and “age their way” in their communities?

Response:

In Oregon, and generally across the country, one value older adults have is to “age in place”. What that means is that older adults want to age in their home. They want to be in an environment that is familiar to them, that they raised their families in, possibly sharing a space with a loved one or spouse in. They don't want to move to find services to get help with cooking, or housekeeping, or other activities. They are wanting to have those services come into their home. (Continued)

I think it's important for people that know older adults or have parents that are older adults to be of aware of this and support it.

Because what we know is that transition, for anybody, can be very challenging. For example, moving to another city, going off to college and the same is true for older adults. When someone says you must move from an environment you are used to and familiar with because you need help with cooking or cleaning etc., this can be upsetting. This can cause depression, and anxieties. My recommendation as far as Age My Way is to support and respect that value of aging in place. Find out more about what that means. This would go a long way.

Question 3. Are there any campaigns or initiatives that you are involved with that you would like our readers to be aware of?

Response:

Yes, coincidentally this interview coincides with a kickoff initiative that has just started with Seniors and Center 50+ in our main senior center here in Salem. My colleague Dr. David Haber has developed a six-part workshop seminar called *Promoting Healthy Aging*. The curriculum has expanded from a previous version. We are really excited about it. It's a community health education initiative that is coinciding with Older Americans Month in May. The curriculum has nutrition, health, sleep, mental health, social isolation, exercise, vaccination education and more with all the latest research. Dr. Haber is a retired professor and wrote the book *Health Promotion and Aging*, it's in its eighth edition. Dr. Haber has taken all his knowledge and is sharing it with us and the community.

Another initiative that is going on right now is the Mid-Valley Older Adult Behavioral Health (Clinical) Geriatric Core Competencies workforce development series. My counter parts in Polk and Yamhill Countys' and myself are offering the quarterly training series 2022 (Part 1) at the end of March. This is a free virtual training called Neuro-Cognition & Older Adults: The Basics.

We would like to thank Patrick Brodigan for her expertise! If you have more questions for Patrick or want to nominate another expert to spotlight for our Winter 2021 Prevention Newsletter released in December, contact us at MCHDPrevention@co.marion.or.us.

For local questions and more information on either the *Promoting Healthy Aging* workshop seminars or the quarterly *Geriatric Core Competencies* training series 2022 you can contact Mr. Brodigan directly at: PBrodigan@co.marion.or.us, or 503-588-5624.

Resources:

- [Aging and Disability Resource Center](#)
- [Seniors & Center 50+](#)
- [Oregon Older Adult Behavioral Health Initiative](#)