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**CONQUERING DEPRESSION
IN THE GOLDEN YEARS:**

Innovative Strategy to

Fight Depression

Langdon Street Press (160 pp.)

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Help is on the horizon for senior citizens debilitated by depression.

Author and psychiatrist Bragin is founder and medical director of the Stress Relief and Memory Training Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., and a clinician and researcher with more than 40 years of experience. In his work with geriatric patients, he developed the Brain Activation Program to treat depression and enhance memory and concentration. He sees depression—the “quiet assassin”—as a whole-body illness and the cause, not the result, of numerous medical problems in the elderly, including cardiac disease, diabetes, arthritis and Alzheimer’s. In addition to traditional drugs and psychotherapy, the author advocates a regimen of supplements, memory training, stress-management techniques and physical exercises to stimulate the flow of blood, oxygen and glucose to the brain.

Instead of passively waiting for a jump-start from medications, patients become active partners in their treatment, employing sensory activation to allow the brain to repair. The program encompasses positive affirmations, hand, finger and spine exercises, charts for eye and hand coordination, meditations and visualizations, and muscle-relaxation techniques. Exercising the hands—like rolling a tennis ball between the palms while counting backward and forward—is especially effective since the hands retain functionality longer than other body parts. After only a ten-minute workout, patients may experience positive emotions and a sense of well-being without any adverse effect on the cardiovascular system. One sensory exercise is the “hand contrast bath,” which involves immersing the hands first in cold water, then hot and in cold water again to stimulate pleasant feelings. The book is indexed for reference and has an appendix of recipes for salads, entrees and soups to improve digestion. In spite of a few minor usage errors, the material is in a format that is easy to understand. Instructions for exercises, activities and recipes are straightforward and simple to follow. As a bonus, most of the text is in large print. Overall, the guide presents a comprehensive method for those in their “golden years” to actively participate in restoring their health and well-being.

Concise, user-friendly guide for the elderly.

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