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and references, visit online at
www.fountainofhealth.ca



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
La santé mentale pour tous



cagp

CANADIAN ACADEMY OF
GERIATRIC PSYCHIATRY

acpg

L'ACADÉMIE CANADIENNE
DES PSYCHIATRIE GÉRIATRIQUE



Canadian Coalition for
Seniors' Mental Health
Coalition Canadienne pour la Santé
Mentale des Personnes Âgées



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Mental Health Support For Seniors

Myths and Facts



Mind Your Mental Health!



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Healthy Living. Positive Aging.

TAP INTO YOUR FOUNTAIN OF HEALTH!

Common Myths: Get the Facts

Are common myths preventing you from getting the professional support you need? Get the facts so you can get the help you deserve.



Myth #1: If I have a mental illness, I am a weak person.

Fact: We know more about the science of mental illness now. You are **not** weak if you struggle with mental health challenges. There are a number of things that might lead to challenges, including family history, changes to our brain, or the way that difficult events impact you. Mental illnesses affect one in five Canadians. You are not alone. Seek support. You don't have to suffer on your own.

Myth #2: Other people will judge me if I visit a mental health service. They will think I'm crazy.

Fact: Attitudes about mental health issues have changed. Many seniors reach out and seek mental health support. Mental health issues are now considered with more acceptance. The more we talk about it the better!

National Mental Health Resources for Seniors

Alzheimer Society of Canada

www.alzheimer.ca

1-800-616-8816 (toll-free in Canada)

Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health

ccsmh.ca 613-233-1619 (office) 613-614-9450 (mobile)

Canadian Mental Health Association

Find your local branch from www.cmha.ca

613-745-7750

Fountain of Health website

More mental health messages can be found at fountainofhealth.ca/optimal-aging/mental-health

Government of Canada: Information for Seniors

More resources in your province, including the Seniors' Guide, can be found at www.seniors.gc.ca/eng/index.shtml
1-800-622-6232 (toll-free)

Are you having a mental health crisis? If so, go to the nearest hospital, call 911 or a crisis line. Find your local 24-hour Crisis Line at: suicideprevention.ca/thinking-about-suicide/find-a-crisis-centre/

**Contact your family physician or other healthcare providers for more resources.*

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Dan's Story



Dan enjoyed his job as a bus driver. He enjoyed activities like hiking, hunting, and trout fishing. After retirement, he began to lose interest in fishing and other hobbies. He became more negative. He seemed lonely and lost. His daughter noticed these changes.

Dan's daughter encouraged him to get help. Finally he did. He was diagnosed with depression and began to take medications.

Now Dan is feeling better. The support he got from family and health professionals made a difference. He is now able to enjoy fishing and other activities once again.

To learn more about Dan's story, watch his video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdhPfAnm4xo

To learn more about depression in later life, visit www.baycrest.org/educate/mental-health/depression/

Myth #3: Mental illnesses are not medical conditions. There is no treatment for them.

Fact: Mental illnesses are medical conditions. A number of treatments are available. Find out more about treatments on the next page.

Myth #4: Anxiety disorders, depression, and dementia are a normal part of aging.

Fact: Depression, anxiety disorders, and dementia are common among seniors, but they are **not** a usual part of aging. In the case of depression, the impact is more severe in older adults. For all of these conditions, early diagnosis and treatment is important.

Myth #5: If I am diagnosed with a mental health issue, I will be locked up in a hospital, lose my home or lose control over my life.

Fact: Mental health services are here to support you in your personal goals. Mental health care providers aim to help you overcome the impact of a mental illness and maintain your independence.

Mental health conditions can be resolved or improved. Seek professional support when you need it!

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Facts about Treatments

Depression, anxiety and dementia are common disorders among older adults. Disorder means that symptoms impact day-to-day function and quality of life. Early detection is important for all of these conditions. There are treatments that can help.

Depression is caused by many different factors including changes in brain chemistry and challenging life events. It can be treated in many ways including antidepressant medications, with different types of talk therapy, and lifestyle changes. You can lower your risk of depression by getting out more-- social activity and physical exercise have been shown to improve mood.

Anxiety disorders can be caused by a number of factors. One cause is an over reactive nervous system. A type of talk therapy called cognitive behavioral therapy can help. So can anti-anxiety medications. Lifestyle changes can also relieve symptoms. For example, getting a good sleep can help. Sleep can be improved by meditating, exercising, and having a sleep routine.

Dementia is caused by physical changes to the brain. Medications can slow down the disease and improve day-to-day abilities. Keeping active can also help. This includes physical exercise, mental activity, and social activity. Education and support for family caregivers is also very important.

What is it like to receive mental health support?

When you seek mental health help, you can bring a family member with you for support. Your visit usually lasts an hour or two. The health professional you see might be a physician, a nurse, or another mental health specialist. They will ask you questions—and they will listen.

After they better understand your situation, they will give you helpful suggestions. They might suggest medications, lifestyle counseling, supportive visits, or links to other community resources. You can talk over these suggestions with your family doctor. Then **you decide** what will work best for you. You will **not** be forced to take medications. Mental health services are there to serve you. They are there to help you to help yourself. **All your information is kept confidential.**



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