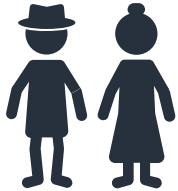


KEY MESSAGES: Mental health impacts of COVID-19

OLDER ADULTS



INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF OLDER CANADIANS

Pandemic-response measures have negatively impacted aging Canadians both in long-term care (LTC) settings as well as those living in the community. Older adults are more likely to experience social isolation and loneliness if they are widowed, female, of low socio-economic status, live alone, or live with a chronic condition.



SOCIAL CONNECTION IS IMPORTANT

Maintaining social connections and addressing loneliness are important factors for mental wellness in older populations. Social connection contributes to improved mood, emotions and cognition, and reduces anxiety, depression and other negative outcomes, including responsive behaviours in individuals with dementia.



VIRTUAL THERAPY IS EFFECTIVE

There are benefits to internet cognitive behavioural therapy, telephone cognitive behavioural therapy or telephone psychotherapy.

Access to technology, technological literacy, and a sustained long-term care workforce may prevent older adults from accessing and/or benefitting from these interventions.



THERE ARE STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH, BUT THEY MAY BE DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT DUE TO RESOURCE CHALLENGES AND INFECTION PREVENTION MEASURES

Managing pain, implementing structured bedtime routines, creating opportunities for creative expression, and maintaining religious or cultural practices may promote mental health but may not be feasible in the COVID-19 context, particularly in long-term care settings.

MORE RESEARCH IS NEEDED ON SOCIAL CONNECTIONS IN OLDER POPULATIONS, BOTH WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAKS AND BEYOND

Learn more at <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/52001.html>