



Aging and mental health: How can we destigmatize and build resilience through conversations in home & community care?

The Mental Health Continuum for Aging Canadians

	All Good (No immediate follow-up)	Take Notice (Continue to monitor)	Find Support (Encourage engagement with support network/ community services)	Seek Care (Refer or link to mental health care provider/ clinicians)
	← Has there been a change from usual?		→ Has the change become a pattern?	
			→ Is the pattern causing anyone concern?	
Thoughts, Feelings & Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy going Calm Positive outlook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frustration Nervous/worried Indifference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anger Stressed/afraid Negative outlook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furious Panic/paranoia Hopeless/despair
Daily Routine & Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active (work, home, volunteer) Basic needs are met (e.g., food, clothing, shelter) Self-care/personal hygiene maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose to be less active Basic needs are sometimes missed Skipping some usual self-care/ personal hygiene tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not active due to loss Difficulty meeting basic needs (e.g., bills unpaid, access to food) Self-care and personal hygiene tasks are rare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No desire to be active Not able to meet basic needs (e.g., loss of housing, no winter clothing) Self-care/personal hygiene completely neglected
Sleep Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting enough sleep for needs Minimal sleep disruptions Comfortable/safe sleep location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleeping more/less than desired Occasional sleep disruptions (e.g., nightmares) Sometimes alternate sleep location (e.g., couch) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleeping too much/little for needs Mostly disrupted sleep (e.g., bathroom trips, noise) Sleep location is mostly not ideal (e.g., recliner, wheelchair) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always sleeping/never sleeping Cannot stay asleep (e.g., health condition, intrusive thoughts, behaviours) No comfortable or safe sleep location
Physical Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent body weight No pain Able to rest/be still 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor gradual weight loss/gain Well-managed pain Fidgeting (e.g., restless legs, wringing hands, tapping) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major gradual weight loss/gain Increased or new unmanaged pain Nervous behaviours (e.g., scratching, picking, pacing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major sudden weight loss/gain Debilitating chronic pain Injuries or unexplained marks/ bruises
Relationships, Participation & Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfied with personal/provider relationship(s) Satisfying involvement in community (e.g., shopping, religious, online) Feeling connected/companionship (e.g., someone with shared interests, doing things together) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some dissatisfaction with personal/provider relationship(s) Less involvement in community than desired (e.g., seasonal weather) Less connection/companionship than desired (e.g., nobody to share meal with socially) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major loss of personal/provider relationship(s) (e.g., death, move) Difficulty with involvement in community (e.g., transportation, digital literacy) Sometimes lonely/seeking attention (e.g., online) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative/harmful or lack of meaningful relationship(s) No sense of belonging to a community Chronically lonely or socially vulnerable
Habits & Coping Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use/consumption of products does not impede & may improve daily routine (e.g., alcohol, medications, drugs, tobacco, food) Engagement in hobbies/interests/ leisure does not impede or may improve daily routine (e.g., gaming, shopping, collecting, exercise, gambling, social/traditional media) Talks openly about habits & coping strategies (e.g., balance/recovery) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use/consumption of products is making daily routine more difficult Engagement in hobbies/interests/ leisure is making daily routine more difficult Hides/covers-up use of habits & coping strategies (e.g., pill bottles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use/consumption of products has led to major life changes/self-harm Engagement in hobbies/interests/ leisure has led to major life changes/ self-harm Lies or denies habits and coping strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use/consumption of products is unsustainable/dangerous to life All-consuming engagement in hobbies/interests/leisure is unsustainable/dangerous to life Extreme measures taken to continue habits & coping strategies (e.g., theft)

Figure 1: The Mental Health Continuum for Aging Canadians (MHCAC)

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For more information about the MHCAC:

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https://research.sehc.com/SEHCResearch/media/Research_Centre/files/AIS-480-Research-On-The-Run-EN.pdf