

Comprehensive List of Questions on Aging & Mental Health in Canada

This comprehensive list is a result of collaborative efforts from the SE Research Centre, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), and individuals and organizations from across Canada. This list tracks how the original 42 questions identified from survey 1 were screened, prioritized, and ranked to generate the final top 10 list. For more information on the steps involved, you can read our detailed project summary here:

https://research.sehc.com/SEHCResearch/media/Research_Centre/pdfs/AIS-320-2021_05_19-Research-on-the-Run.pdf

Top 10 Unanswered Questions on Aging and Mental Health in Canada¹

1. How can health care providers who are not mental health specialists build their skills for providing mental health care to older adults? (e.g., family doctors, personal support workers, nurses, rehabilitation therapists etc.)
2. What type of support minimizes the mental health impacts of loneliness for those who are socially isolated?
3. How can older adults and caregivers better access mental health care when they need it? (e.g., location, cost, technology)
4. What does person-centered mental health care look like for older adults? (e.g., meeting individual needs and preferences)
5. What are the challenges and opportunities for using technology to provide mental health support and care to older adults?
6. What mental health care is needed by older adults during care transitions? (e.g., from hospital to home, from home to long-term care)
7. How can mental health care providers be better protected from burnout when providing care for older adults?

8. How can mental health care planning better include the perspectives of family caregivers? (e.g., shared decision-making)
9. What financial supports or resources are most useful to older adults who cannot afford mental health care?
10. What health and social care services are most needed by caregivers of older adults with mental health issues?

Unanswered Questions on Aging and Mental Health in Canada (that did not make the top 10 list)²

11. What mental health supports are needed in long-term-care?
12. What support is needed by older adults dealing with substance use and addictions issues? (e.g., cannabis, alcohol, prescription medications, gambling etc.)
13. What support do family caregivers need when they disagree with the mental health care provided to the older adult they support?
14. How can peer support be used to improve mental health care for older adults?
15. How do/should treatment options differ for older adults compared to the general population?
16. What information can help people understand the differences between mental health and cognitive health?
17. Would reducing financial barriers to accessing mental health care improve older adult's use of these services?
18. How can system-level healthcare funding be distributed to prioritize older adult mental health support, care and treatment?
19. How can I and others help reduce the stigma around aging and mental health?

20. What supports help with the fear of unpredictable /unexpected life changes? (e.g. job loss, divorce, death)
21. How can I or others provide support for an older adult's mental health needs?
22. How can we better address the concerns older adults have around using mental health services like counselling?
23. How does publicly available information on aging and mental health include different culture and language-speaking groups?
24. What supports help to protect mental health in preparation for and during expected life transitions and change? (e.g. retirement, empty nest)
25. How can mental health care providers ensure that older adult patients feel physically and emotionally safe during treatment?

Answered Questions on Aging and Mental Health³

26. Are there simple tools available to help people identify signs of positive or poor mental health in themselves or others?
27. What supports can help people prepare for physical and mental changes as they age? (e.g. decreased mobility, reduced memory)
28. What supports help caregivers protect their mental wellbeing while caring for persons with mental health issues?
29. How can care navigators help older adults and caregivers get the mental health support they need?
30. What statistics exist to describe age-related mental health in Canada?
31. What training supports employment and productivity in later life?
32. What support is needed so older adults experience continuity of mental health care?
33. How can physical health care providers and mental health care providers work better together to care for older adults?

- 34.** How does mental health care for older adults (i.e., geriatric mental health care) differ from general mental health care?
- 35.** What does effective home care look like for older adults with mental health issues and their caregivers?
- 36.** How do social and structural determinants of health impact mental health care for older adults? (e.g. income, location, ethnicity, etc.)
- 37.** What information is needed to guide the support, care, and treatment of depression in older adults?
- 38.** What type of prevention /early intervention is effective for treatment of mental health issues in older adults?
- 39.** What alternative treatments are available to support mental health in a way that will minimize disruptions to the day-to-day lives of older adults?
- 40.** What information is available around medically assisted death for older adults dealing with mental health illnesses?
- 41.** How can mental health treatments be better promoted to older adults with mental health illnesses?
- 42.** How do care providers ensure that their patients are appropriately prescribed and supported to use medications to treat their mental health issues?

¹ These questions were identified from survey 1, were unanswered after a rapid review of recent evidence, and were prioritized in survey 2 before being ranked as the 10 most important unanswered questions in a series of 4 online workshops

² These questions were identified from survey 1, and were unanswered after a rapid review of recent evidence, but they were either: 1) not prioritized in survey 2, or 2) they were not ranked in the top 10 unanswered questions during the online workshops

³ These questions were identified from survey 1 but were found to be answered after a rapid review of recent evidence