

Top 10 Unanswered Questions on Aging & Mental Health in Canada

This 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. It was developed and prioritized from over 1000 survey responses, a rapid literature review, and steering group meetings, before it was ranked through a series of workshops with 52 participants representing older adult, caregiver, and health/social care provider perspectives.

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?