

Mental Health Matters

Every month CARP Halton will feature a Mental Health segment. This segment will feature information to enrich your Mental Health understanding.

Approximately 14% of adults aged 70 and over worldwide experience mental health disorders, most commonly depression and anxiety. Key risk factors include social isolation, chronic illness, and bereavement, which can significantly impact quality of life. Effective treatment is available, and maintaining physical activity and social connections is crucial for mental well-being in older age.

Key Mental Health Issues in Adults Over 70

- **Depression and Anxiety**: These are the most prevalent issues, often stemming from losses (health, loved ones) or reduced independence.
- **Social Isolation and Loneliness**: A major risk factor, affecting 12% of seniors in some areas, which significantly impacts mental health.
- **Cognitive Decline and Dementia**: Increased risks associated with aging, impacting mood and behavior.
- **Substance Use/Medication Issues**: Misuse of alcohol or medication can contribute to depression or cognitive issues.
- **Suicide Risk**: A significant concern, with individuals over 70 accounting for 16.6% of global suicide deaths.

Factors Influencing Mental Health

- **Physical Health**: Chronic pain, cancer, or disability often lead to mental health challenges.

- **Life Changes**: Loss of a spouse, friends, or leaving the workforce can trigger intense grief or loneliness.
- **Stigma and Ageism**: Older adults may avoid seeking help due to stigma, or their symptoms may be wrongly dismissed as "normal aging".

Support and Management

- **Healthcare Access**: It is crucial to consult healthcare providers for diagnosis, as many conditions are treatable.
- **Physical Activity**: Regular movement helps improve mood, increase energy, and manage chronic conditions.
- **Social Connection**: Maintaining relationships, volunteering, or engaging in community activities helps combat isolation.
- **Resources**: Organizations like the Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health (CCSMH) provide specialized resources for older adults.

For immediate, confidential support, individuals can call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 24/7.

From the Internet