



# Lifeline

## Seniors and mental health

How seniors can  
maintain their mental  
health and well-  
being



# You are not alone

15% of Canadian seniors suffer from loneliness, depression or other mental disorders.<sup>1</sup> But help is available.

Seniors go through many life changes that can lead to mental health issues like depression, loneliness and anxiety.

Mental disorders can make people feel helpless. They can be brought on by many things, like:

- ▶ Loss of friends and loved ones
- ▶ Physical health problems
- ▶ Worrying about money

The good news is that mental illness is as treatable as physical illness. The only difference between the two is that mental illness affects your mood, behaviour and thinking instead of your physical body.

Mental illness is not a sign of weakness, a character flaw or a failing of any kind.

There are approximately 1 million Canadian seniors who are struggling with mental illness<sup>2</sup> so you are not alone. There is a lot of help available. You do not need to suffer in silence.

The purpose of this brochure is to inform you about the most common kinds of mental illnesses older adults face, how to recognize the warning signs and how to get help.

1. World Health Organization, *Mental Health of Older Adults*, December 12, 2017.

2. Based on Statistics Canada and World Health Organization figures.



## What are the most common mental illnesses in seniors?

**Depression** is the most common mental disorder. It affects 7% of all seniors<sup>3</sup>. Left untreated, it can harm emotional well-being and social functioning and make physical illnesses worse.

**Anxiety and panic disorders** cause worry and fear. They affect about 4% of older adults<sup>3</sup> and are closely associated with depression – nearly half of the people who have anxiety disorders also have depression.<sup>3</sup>

Fortunately, these mental illnesses can be managed very effectively with therapy and medication.

If you're ever in need, Lifeline provides peace of mind and a simple, fast connection with people who can help.

## What are the warning signs that you might be suffering from a mental disorder?

As we grow older, we often see changes in our mood or thinking. But, if you have persistent or severe depression, loneliness or anxiety, it could be a sign of something more serious.

Here are some of the warning signs that you should share with your doctor:

- ▶ Avoiding friends and family
- ▶ Loss of appetite
- ▶ Difficulty sleeping or too much sleep
- ▶ Feelings of hopelessness
- ▶ Activity that is hard to control
- ▶ Finding it hard to concentrate
- ▶ Increased anger or aggressiveness
- ▶ Feeling on edge and restless
- ▶ Antisocial behaviours or thoughts
- ▶ Difficulty looking after your personal appearance, home or other daily tasks

3. International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research, Anxiety disorders and comorbid depression in community dwelling older adults, August 24, 2011.





## What kinds of help are available?

Your first and best source of help is your doctor, who can diagnose your illness and help you get the help you need.

In the meantime, nutritious meals and being active will help you to feel better.

There are also resources that specialize in mental health care for seniors. Here are a few:

### **The Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health (CCSMH)**

Phone: (289) 846-5383

Website: [www.ccsmh.ca](http://www.ccsmh.ca)

### **The Canadian Mental Health Association**

Phone: 1-800-875-6213

Website: [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

### **Mood Disorders Society of Canada**

Phone: (613) 921-5565

Website: [www.mdsc.ca](http://www.mdsc.ca)

And don't forget that Lifeline also provides around-the-clock access to help and support when you need it most.

## How Lifeline helps seniors who need help.

The quick, easy access to 24/7 emergency help provided by the Lifeline medical alert service helps you to feel safe and worry less.

Lifeline's Response Centre staff are highly trained in the needs of older adults. And our staff genuinely care. Our subscribers aren't just numbers to us. They're someone's mother or father or spouse, who wants to live with confidence and peace of mind.

*"Lifeline has made all the difference in the world to me. To know that help is just a button press away allows me the freedom to live without making compromises fueled by fear."*

- Ruth, subscriber

**Call today to learn more about Lifeline.**



# Why choose Lifeline for your well-being?

- ▶ Lifeline is the #1 medical alert service in Canada.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ All help calls answered in Canada at one of our two Lifeline Response Centres
- ▶ Professional home installation
- ▶ Proven AutoAlert fall detection technology available
- ▶ No landline phone needed.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Claim based on the number of subscribers

<sup>2</sup> For cellular service options, a customer phone number is required to enroll. Assumes the location of the communicator is in an area with sufficient access to coverage by the third party cellular network provider.

[www.lifeline.ca](http://www.lifeline.ca)

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