



Canadian Coalition
for Seniors' Mental Health

Coalition Canadienne pour
la Santé Mentale des
Personnes Âgées

Winter Newsletter - January 2021

Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health



Highlights

- CCSMH position paper on "The Mental Health of Older Adults Living in LTC"
- Cannabis & Older Adults Project Update
- ECHO Care of the Elderly: Mental Health Program for clinicians

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CO-CHAIR REPORT

We have recently finalized a position paper on the mental health of older adults living in Long Term Care (LTC). It is posted on our [website here](#). Our position paper was co-written with the Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry (CAGP) and outlines a number of recommendations that support the mental health and wellbeing of older adults living in LTC homes in Canada. Our paper provides a reminder that mental health care is an essential service that must be maintained at all times and that people living in LTC have the right to mental health, medical care and social services regardless of their age, the presence of dementia or a diagnosis of mental illness. Infection control measures are paramount but must balance the impact of these measures on the quality of life and dignity of LTC residents.

In the Speech from the Throne, our Federal government announced that they will be working with Canada's provinces and territories in order to establish national Standards of care for LTC homes across the country. The CCSMH and the CAGP have reached out to government officials to ensure that a consideration of mental health and wellbeing of older adults in LTC be integral in work moving forward. We have offered our support and expertise towards this end. Please read on to learn more about this and other work that we are currently involved in.

Best,

Drs. Kiran Rabheru and David Conn
CCSMH Co-Chairs

Claire Checkland, Executive Director

CCSMH News

CAGP/CCSMH Position Statement for Mental Health Care in Long-Term Care During COVID-19

The CCSMH/CAGP position paper outlines the essential nature of mental health services and supports for people living in long-term care and states our position on required policy change that would help support these needs moving forward.

The position paper can be found here: [CCSMH / CAGP: COVID 19 Mental Health in LTC](#)

CAGP/CCSMH Annual Scientific Meeting



The Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry (CAGP) and the Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health (CCSMH) are pleased to announce that the Call for Abstracts for the CAGP-CCSMH Annual Scientific Meeting

(ASM) is open until **March 9, 2021!**

The theme of this year's meeting is: "Geriatric Psychiatry in Challenging Times: Embracing Opportunities for Advocacy, Inclusion and Innovation."

We encourage submissions that relate to the theme of the conference, particularly those that highlight new or emerging topics, research or treatments and those that place an emphasis on health equity, diversity and social justice. This can include submissions focused on diverse gender and sexual identities, Indigenous health, cultural safety, anti-racism, disability, poverty and other underrepresented topics related to vulnerabilities/inequities in older adult mental health care. For more information visit: <http://www.cagp.ca/2021-ASM>

Cannabis and Older Adults Project Update

Thank you to the many supporters of our recent **Cannabis and Older Adults Needs Assessment Survey**. Our survey was conducted in order for us to learn more about clinician's and older adults experiences and thoughts about cannabis use in aging. The findings from this survey will help us design the content of a series of e-learning modules for clinicians to learn more about the current state of evidence and use of cannabis among their older patients.

Over **1500 individuals** responded to our survey from across Canada including 686 older adults! We were thrilled to hear from so many of you on this important topic.

Some highlights of the Needs Assessment Survey are as follows;

- **89%** of physicians and nurse practitioners are aware of older adults in their practice using cannabis
- **39%** of physicians and nurse practitioners felt that they had sufficient knowledge to address older patients and their caregivers' questions about cannabis
- **41%** of older adults responded that their healthcare provider was not able to answer their questions on cannabis
- Anxiety, pain and to help with sleep are the most common reasons that older adults report using cannabis

Here's one of the many quotes that we heard from older adults who responded to our survey – we will be keeping this sort of sentiment front of mind as we develop this clinician-focused course.

"I often hear people say "it helps everything" or "it helps my pain/anxiety/etc. like nothing else". I doubt this is true for everyone and would want my health care provider to know the research and clearly explain indications. I'm am also always afraid of side effects so would need to be reassured that risks would be worth the benefits. "

We will be developing the modules over the next several months and aim to launch the modules in late fall 2021.

Stay tuned for future updates on the project. If you are a healthcare provider or older adult who is interested in becoming involved in this project as a writer, or reviewer, please reach out to us via info@ccsmh.ca

National Echo Project – Mental Health of Older Adults

CCSMH, Baycrest and the Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry, are excited to launch a National ECHO Care of the Elderly: Mental Health program.



Project ECHO is an education program that uses case-based learning and videoconferencing to build capacity in healthcare providers. ECHO follows a 'Hub' and 'Spoke' model which aims to exchange knowledge between academic health science centers and community care partners. It relies on the flow of knowledge in multiple directions: from specialists to primary care providers; between primary care providers; and from primary care providers to specialists.

Sessions will run on Zoom every Friday from 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm EST starting Feb 19th until Mar 26th, 2021.

To register, please complete the application using the following link:

<https://redcap.baycrest.org/redcap/surveys/?s=T9WFYXFCAR>

Registration is limited so sign up soon!

For more information about Project ECHO Care of the Elderly: <https://baycrest.echoontario.ca/>

For more information about Project ECHO: <https://hsc.unm.edu/echo/>

For more information, contact Jasmeen Guraya – jguraya@baycrest.org

Stay in Touch

CCSMH online Covid-19 resources

Visit our website at to view some timely resources including *Activities to Do While Physical Distancing*, *Mental Health Support Lines for Seniors in Canada*, *Tips for Battling Anxiety During this Public Health Situation* and *Virtual Visits Toolkit*

[COVID-19 Resources – Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health \(ccsmh.ca\)](https://ccsmh.ca)

Make a donation!

Mental illness is not a normal part of aging. You can help us promote the mental health of seniors by donating to the CCSMH today. Click below to access our fundraising page on Canada Helps. [CCSMH | Impact Seniors' Mental Health in Canada! Campaign](#) | [Canadahelps](#)

Follow us!



Consider following our Twitter and Facebook social media accounts. We can be found at **@CCSMH**

CCSMH/CAGP 2020 Seniors' Mental Health Outstanding Care & Integrative Practice Award

Congratulations Dr. Carol Ward!

We were thrilled to recognize Dr. Carol Ward this fall with the CCSMH/CAGP Seniors' Mental Health Outstanding Care and Integrative Practice Award for 2020. This award is presented annually to an individual, team, service or program in recognition of leading role in providing outstanding seniors' mental healthcare and integrative practice models.

Carol is described by her colleagues as “an exemplary geriatric psychiatrist, thoughtful educator and leader who possesses exceptional patient centered expertise. The projects and initiatives that she has undertaken are transforming older adult mental health care in the areas of increasing capacity, understanding, and improving quality of care and knowledge transfer for staff who care for our elders with complex mental health needs. “

Atlantic Seniors' Mental Health Network Report

This year the CAGP-CCSMH hosted their first virtual Annual Scientific Meeting. While it was unfortunate that circumstances prevented us from meeting in person, it was great to see representation from all of the Atlantic Canadian provinces at the meeting as well as presentations in the program.

This fall, Fountain of Health in partnership with Dalhousie University presented the "5-Minute CBT" 5-week online course. Offering up to 18 hours MainPro+ Credits, the course was designed for the busy clinicians to learn brief Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) tools to improve coping and health outcomes for patient self-management and for personal benefit. This course brings minimal intervention to life, deepens understanding of behaviour activation and enhances competence in using tools for a wide range of patients, diseases & disorders.

As we look forward to 2021, the ASMHN will be continuing to provide updates from each of the Atlantic Canada provinces on a rotating basis. **We are looking for a volunteer from Prince Edward Island to serve as one of four Co-Chairs.** This role involves sharing provincial updates for the CCSMH newsletter, Chairing one of the ASMHN meetings for members, and helping to promote the work of the CCSMH and ASMHN. If you are interested in this role please contact ccsmh@secretariatcentral.com.

Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy,
Co-Chair, ASMHN

OUR COMMUNITY IN ACTION

News from CCSMH partners and other stakeholders

HealthCareCAN and the Mental Health Commission of Canada Spotlight on mental health in the workplace

As the co-lead of the Quality Mental Health Care Network (QMHCN) with the Mental Health Care Commission of Canada, HealthCareCAN is developing the Quality Mental Health Care Framework (the Framework), a key initiative by the QMHCN. HealthCareCAN is pleased to provide members with the attached policy brief outlining our progress in defining quality mental health care and the essential quality dimensions that encompass the provision of quality mental health care.

The intent of the framework - which can be customized – will be to serve as a guide for health leaders in developing solutions that address comprehensive mental health care for patients while also considering the mental health care needs of the providers.

Read Now: [PolicyBrief-HCCMHCC_EN.pdf \(healthcarecan.ca\)](#)

Memory Café Nova Scotia

Memory Café NS is excited to announce their 2021 virtual winter series of Memory Cafes! Thanks to emergency COVID19 rural community development funding as well as generous local support from the Mud Creek Rotary Club, Memory Cafes will run virtually through the winter months for persons living with dementia and their families in rural Nova Scotia.

Memory Cafes are social experiences that bring diverse community members together to help break social isolation and stigma for persons living with dementia. Memory Café Nova Scotia partners with local municipal recreation and wellness leaders, artists, musicians and businesses to bring music, hands- on art experiences, storytelling and conversation in a welcoming social atmosphere-even virtually! Highlights this season will include interactive art with [Holly Carr](#), [Elizabeth Sircom](#) and music by local and Cape Breton musicians. For more information, click to reach their website: [Memory Cafe NS](#)

UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons

The International Longevity Centre (ILC) Canada is calling for a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. Ageism, the stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination against older persons is prevalent worldwide. A UN Convention provides a universal position that ageism is morally and legally unacceptable and obliges states to adopt non- discriminatory laws.

Please go to the [ILC website](#) to learn more about how you can support this call for action

The Decade of Healthy Ageing: a new UN-wide Initiative

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2021-2030 the [Decade of Healthy Ageing](#). The Decade of Healthy Ageing is an opportunity to bring together governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector for ten years of concerted, catalytic and collaborative action to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live.

A decade of concerted global action on Healthy Ageing is urgently needed. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the seriousness of existing gaps in policies, systems and services.

For more information: [The Decade of Healthy Ageing: a new UN-wide initiative \(who.int\)](#)



Alzheimer Society of Canada alzheimer.ca



Dementia Journey Survey. The Alzheimer Society of Canada, in partnership with the College of Family Physicians of Canada, is asking people living with dementia and caregivers to participate in a 20-minute survey to help us understand your experience with the care you receive from your family physician or other healthcare provider. Your experience will help them design and develop new dementia care resources so family physicians can better support people and their care partners through the dementia journey. [Learn more.](#)

Alzheimer Society Advisory Group. The Alzheimer Society is looking for people living with dementia and caregivers to work with them, to ensure that the work they do supports you. Their national platform will give you the chance to reflect your experience living with dementia to fight stigma, by influencing what research we fund, guiding the education material we develop and advocating directly to the federal government. [Learn more.](#)

New resources:

The Alzheimer Society of Canada has developed a number of new resources to provide people living with dementia and caregivers with practical tips to stay safe and healthy during the pandemic. Resources can be found at www.alzheimer.ca/COVID-19

24 Hour Movement Guidelines

Participation has developed 24-hour movement guidelines for Older Adults 65+. For health benefits, adults aged 65 years or older should be physically active each day, minimize sedentary behaviour, and achieve sufficient sleep. Additional information can be found here: [Benefits & Guidelines: Older Adults 65+ | ParticipACTION](#)



The Canadian Deprescribing Network

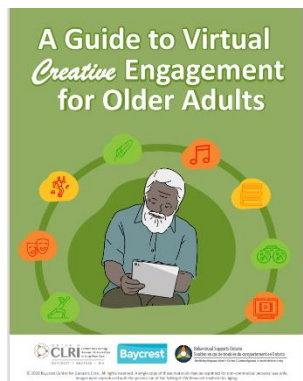
The Canadian Deprescribing Network has developed a wide variety of resources for the public on topics such as *Medication and Memory*, *Medication and Falls* and *What is Deprescribing* to access visit their website at

<https://www.deprescribingnetwork.ca/patients-and-public>



A Guide to Virtual Creative Engagement for Older Adults

Baycrest's Guide to Virtual Creative Engagement for Older Adults (VCE Guide) can help Long Term Care (LTC) teams address the under-stimulation and loneliness felt by residents arising from pandemic restrictions. The VCE Guide features a curated list of free virtual services appropriate for residents with various health conditions and ability levels.



While the tool was designed with focus on LTC environment it can be applied in a variety of settings including acute care and community. LTC Recreational therapists, social workers, nurses, and other team partners, may find the VCE Guide useful for choosing appropriate recreation activities for their clients.

[A Guide to Virtual Creative Engagement for Older Adults \(cri-ltc.ca\)](http://cri-ltc.ca)

CCSMH - CAGP Inter-professional Knowledge Exchange Network (IKEN) Share & Expand Your Knowledge

For a more complete online calendar of events related to brain health/ seniors mental and physical healthcare, please visit: brainxchange.ca/Public/Events.aspx.

Ongoing:

- [ALZeducate Webinars](#)
- [BSO Provincial Lived Experience Advisory Network](#)
- [Gilbrea Centre for Studies in Aging Seminar Series](#)
- [OTN Geriatric Addiction Rounds](#)
- [U-First! In-person Ontario Workshops](#)
- [U-First! Online Course](#)