

# **From Theory to Action: Implementing the Seniors Mental Health Policy Lens**

- To discover the many purposes for which the Policy Lens (PL) is used
- To share experiences in applying the PL in different sectors and provinces
- To share what you learned from applying the PL
- To share strategies for engaging others to use the PL
- To share ideas for promoting organizations/government uptake of the PL
- To share ways the PL can be improved
- To meet people who share your interest in seniors mental health from across Canada
- To influence key stakeholders attending the workshop, to use the PL

- created as part of a national project funded by Public Health Agency of Canada, Population Health Fund
- sponsored by the BC Psychogeriatric Association
- being developed as a best practice in seniors' mental health program and policy design.

# What is the Seniors Mental Health Policy Lens?

- an analytical framework that allows the users to assess government policies, program policies and service delivery policies that pertain to older adults, from a seniors' mental health perspective;
- a set of questions for identifying the possible negative impacts of particular measures on all older adults' mental health and wellbeing.

# Rationale for the Policy Lens

## Why assess policy from a seniors' mental health perspective?

- Ageism
- Prevalence of mental health problems combined with aging population
- Need for lifespan perspective for future seniors
- Currently little seniors' input in policy
- Neglect of psychosocial component of biopsychosocial model
- Fiscal implications – appropriateness of services for seniors

# Conceptual Framework

- Determinants of health: physical and social environments, gender, income and social status, social support networks, culture, personal health practices and coping skills, health services
- Principles of health and mental health promotion, of healthy aging policy and of psychogeriatric care
- National Framework on Aging
- Seniors values/perspective r/t mental health

# SMHPL Areas of Inquiry

1. Addresses diverse needs, circumstances, and aspirations of vulnerable sub-groups.
2. Acknowledge the multiple determinants of health.
3. Considers Accessibility.
4. Social participation and relationships.
5. Senior's Independence and self-determination.
6. Seniors' dignity.
7. Cost/benefit of supporting seniors'
8. Supports seniors' security.
9. Cumulative life effects on seniors'.

# Who Should use the SMHPL?

- Policy-makers
- Program managers
- Evaluators
- Clinicians
- Seniors' Advocacy Groups
- Health Care Professionals
- Educators

# Policy Lens is Diverse, Flexible

- Applicable to vulnerable sub populations of seniors
- Applicable to different regions of Canada.
- Applicable to community, acute and long term care, mental health and seniors' service settings; universities; seniors organizations.

# Applications for the SMHPL

- A quick screen for policies/programs
- Critique of policies and programs
- Develop a policy response.
- Evaluate the potential impact of policy on seniors mental health.
- Educate key stakeholders
- Advocacy
- Guide research and evaluation studies

# Process for using the SMHPL

1. Provide a brief description of policy
2. Using the SMHPL template answer each question with Yes, No, Not Sure, NA.
3. Summate and analyze your responses.
4. Add summary of discussions
5. Decide whether policy should (1) be accepted, or (2) accepted as revised, or (3) more information required, or (4) revision is required.
6. If not accepted revise policy and reapply the lens.

# Applying the SMHPL

1. Policy Description
2. Process Factors
3. Diversity
4. Determinants of Health
5. Accessibility
6. Social participation
7. Independence
8. Dignity
9. Fairness
10. Security
11. Cumulative Impact

	Yes	No	Not Sure	NA
		4		
	1	6	9	
	1	2	2	4
	1	1	2	4
	3			1
		2	2	1
		4	1	
		3	1	
		1		
			2	1
				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>

# Expected Benefits from Using Policy Lens

- Identification of biases in policy that may lead to negative impacts on the mental health of all older adults will lead to action.
- Transparent, rigorous, common approach to evaluating policy pertinent to seniors.
- Increased accountability of those creating policy pertinent to seniors.

# Expected Benefits

- Services more appropriate to the needs and wishes of older adults will be designed
- Barriers to service use that currently exist, will be reduced.
- Facilitate planning for future seniors
- Increased knowledge about impact of the determinants of health & psychosocial factors on seniors' mental health.