

Best Practice Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion Programs: Older Persons 55+

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- Second in series of **E-guides** for promoting positive mental health across life span
- Developed in partnership by
 - ✓ Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)
 - ✓ Centre for Health Promotion (CHP)
 - ✓ Toronto Public Health (TPH)



Partnering with the Seniors Mental Health Policy Lens

Seniors Mental Health Policy Lens (SMHPL) is an analytical tool *whereas*

Best Practice Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion Programs is a practical toolkit

- Not intended as evaluation tool; rather to encourage health and social service providers to include MHP principles in existing initiatives, develop new MHP initiatives, and aid in advocacy
- Complements and enhances the SMHPL
- Promotes positive mental health for older adults through specific community level mental health promotion programs directed at older adults.



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Intended Audiences

- E-guide is directed to health and social service providers (practitioners) involved in health and mental health promotion for older adults, such as public health and community care services
- E-guide is intended to support practitioners, caregivers and others involved in programs for older adults that focus on promoting positive mental health and well-being, such as municipal recreation departments, seniors activity centres, community organizations and health services.



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This resource includes:

- Eleven best practice **guidelines** with supporting **theory** for MHP initiatives re: people 55+
- A **worksheet** to help plan and implement MHP initiatives (including a sample worksheet showing how it has been used in a MHP initiative)
- **Exemplary programs** that have demonstrated the application of best practice guidelines for older adults
- Relevant **websites**, a **glossary** of words commonly used in mental health promotion and **references**



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- This resource will be made available in HTML & as PDF document by July 2008
- Collaboration between the SMHPL Project & the MHP Best Practice Guidelines Project ensures collective work is complementary & provides useful tools to those who offer programs & support to older people



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Project background

Purpose: guidelines define best practices for MHP initiatives

Based on critical analysis of literature reviews

Segmented populations of interest by life stage and context

1st guide addresses MHP for children & youth

2nd guide addresses MHP for older people 55+

3rd & 4th guides address MHP for refugees and immigrants



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Review process

- ✓ Identified need for intended audience to review draft and provide feedback re: relevance & utility
- ✓ Masters student with CHP conducted appraisal of MHP Guide 55+
- ✓ Recruited diverse representation of organizations
- ✓ Telephone interviews conducted with questions focused on usefulness, relevancy, clarity and length of document
- ✓ Analysis identified strengths & areas needing further work
- ✓ Recommendations included reviewing guide's similarities & differences to *Promoting Seniors Well Being: A Policy Lens*



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Focuses on people 55+ years; spans 3-4 decades

Several changes that affect majority of older persons:

- ❖ Retirement
- ❖ Changes in income levels
- ❖ Physical changes
- ❖ Changes in social support networks - e.g. care giving; bereavement; isolation (MacCourt 2004)



Benefits of mental health promotion across the lifespan

Mental health promotion can:

- ✓ Improve physical health & well-being
- ✓ Prevent or reduce the risk of some mental health problems
- ✓ Improve mental health services and the quality of life for people experiencing mental health problems
- ✓ Strengthen community capacity to support social inclusion
- ✓ Increase mental health literacy
- ✓ Improve health at work



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Guideline #1: Identify and address a specific population of interest linked to life transition

- Determine a specific population's needs (considering all aspects of mental & physical health)



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Guideline #2: Address and modify risk & protective factors, including determinants of health, that indicate possible mental health concerns

- Develop plan to enhance protective factors, reduce risk factors and influence the DOH relevant to the specified population



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Guideline #3: Intervene in multiple settings

- Consider all aspects of the environment that affect older adults
- Aim to improve & develop the overall physical and social environment of the setting



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Guideline #4: Support those who work with, or care for older persons in establishing caring and trusting relationships with older people

- Provide training in aging and age-related transitions
- Involve and train older adults to be peer supports & educators



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Guideline #5: Provide a focus on empowerment and self-efficacy through skill building and promoting respect

- Provide skills training to older adults in a variety of topics
- Provide skills training to family members, care givers & peers



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Guideline #6: Promote comprehensive support systems

- Facilitate development or improvement of strong support network for older adults, including emotional, social and physical support through community and health services
- Facilitate networking & collaboration between services and organizations



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Guideline #7: Adopt multiple interventions

- Plan comprehensive approach using multiple strategies
- Use strategies that reinforce each other toward common goals



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Guideline #8: Ensure that information and services provided are culturally appropriate, equitable & holistic

- Consider person as a whole, taking into account physical, emotional, spiritual, religious, mental and social factors that affect mental health
- Facilitate access to culturally relevant supportive social networks, and provide information in understandable & culturally appropriate manner



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Guideline #9: Involve multiple stakeholders

- Engage multiple sectors (e.g. public health; medical services; government; long-term care, community care, recreation, housing, finance, transportation, faith communities, labour)
- Enable members of the specified population to be involved in the planning & decision-making process



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Guideline #10: Address opportunities for organizational change, policy development and advocacy

- Mobilize people 55+ to advocate for themselves and others
- Monitor upcoming legislation & government initiatives, and identify policy initiatives to influence all aspects of community living



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Guideline #11: Demonstrate long-term commitment to program planning, development and evaluation

- Conduct situational assessment to inform initiative, taking into account the population's diversity plus their strengths & assets
- Involve members of specified population in program design, implementation and evaluation



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Questions or comments?



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