

Training for Retirement  
Module #5: Emotional and Mental Health

**Materials**

- make sure you read the handout beforehand so you can be knowledgeable about dementia and depression!
- bucket or box that has a lid
- several small pieces of paper, pens

**Introduction (5 min)**

Ask how everyone's week went. Did they do the daily dose? What kind of physical activity did they do?

Today's topic is on mental and emotional health. Mental health is the capacity to feel, think, and act in ways that allow a person to enjoy life and deal with life's challenges. The common misconception is that people think mental health problems are a normal part of aging. This is NOT true. Difficulties with mood, thinking and behaviour are not an inevitable part of aging. Nor are they signs of personal weakness. They may be signs that something is wrong that requires attention from a health care professional.

Older adults, just like adults, will experience ups and downs; however this stage of life can present additional challenges and losses. Remember that mental and emotional health can be promoted and improved at all stages of life – even if someone currently lives with a mental health problem or illness.

**Active Warm up (5 min)**

- Back stretch: targets back muscles useful for twist or turning to look behind (backing out of a parking space, swinging a golf club). If you've had hip or back surgery you may not want to try this stretch.
  - o Sit up toward the front of a chair with armrests. Stay as straight as possible. Keep feet flat on floor, spread out.
  - o Slowly twist to the left from your waist without moving your hips. Turn your head to the left. Lift your left hand and hold on to the left arm of the chair. Place your right hand on the outside of your left thigh.
  - o Hold for 10-30 seconds.
  - o Slowly return to center. Repeat on right side. *They can repeat 3-5x at home.*

**Dementia and Depression (10-12 min) Handout**

According to the World Health Organization, over 20% of adults aged 60 and over suffer from a mental or neurological disorder and 6.6% of all disability among over 60s is due to neurological and mental disorders. The most common neuropsychiatric disorders in this age group are **dementia** and **depression**. We will focus on these two today.

In two groups (one group is dementia, one group is depression), talk about these 3 things and be ready to share it with the rest of the group after 5-7 min. It's okay if you don't have a lot of knowledge on it but discuss the best you can:

- How would you define it?
- What are the risk factors to getting this disorder for older adults?
- What are the symptoms?

## Consultant Copy

After each group shares their answers, as a whole group, brainstorm what you should do about it if you have it. Emphasize importance of social connectedness. *Refer to handout. Make sure you read this handout beforehand so you are well versed about the two disorders. Make sure everyone feels comfortable and is sensitive to the topic.*

### Daily Dose (5 min)

- “Daily Dose” is a way to make physical activity into your daily routine. How it works is you attach a physical activity to a daily routine and location. Everybody stands up for this and does it together while you demonstrate first.
- Today’s daily dose is the **alternating side-leg lift**
  - o Done in the bathroom when brushing teeth
  - o Tuck in your pelvis and tighten your stomach muscles (like when coughing).
  - o Stand tall with your legs apart and knees slightly bent. You can hold counter for support
  - o Moving from the hip, lift your right leg out to the side with controlled speed. Slowly bring the leg back to starting position. Repeat on other leg 10x. (You may only repeat once on each side)

**Activity: Bucket List (5 min)** *Need a bucket or box that has a lid, several small pieces of paper, pens*

Give everyone 1-2 pieces of paper and a pen.

Write down a minimum of one thing you can do to enjoy your life. Be creative. Think outside the box. Do not be afraid to dream big or worry about what’s feasible. The point is to write something down that you truly want to do and would bring joy to you. It can involve just you, your spouse, grandkids, friend, anyone.

Have participants fold it and put it in the bucket/box. They will open this during the last module as a group and read it one by one.

### Closing (5 min)

- Health encompasses not just physical, but emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Remember that mental health is not just a normal part of aging but you have an active role in controlling that
- Remember to keep up with ALL of your SMART goals
- Keep in touch with your accountability partner. **Choose a day that he/she will check in (email/call/text/etc).** It can be someone in the group or your sibling, spouse, friend.
- Continue with your physical activity and healthy eating action plan
- Find professional help if you are suffering from dementia or depression
- Do the daily dose every day!
- Date for next session