



Protecting Your Mental Health:

What can you do as an older adult?

The COVID-19 situation has been a difficult time for many of us. Here are some things we can all do to stay mentally well during these challenging times.

1. Connect with family and friends

Connect with family and friends in person or through the phone, texting, video chats, and social media. Reconnect with friends you have not heard from in a while. Digital tools like Skype, Zoom, Google Hangout, and Facetime are a great way to have face-to-face conversations while maintaining physical distancing. For assistance in learning how to use technology check out:

www.ConnectedCanadians.ca

2. Get physical

Staying active and getting enough exercise are as important for seniors' mental health and older adults' well-being, as they are at any other stage of life. Activities like taking regular walks, yoga classes, and cycling benefit both the mind and the body by boosting confidence and reducing the risk of falls.

3. Keep your brain active

Reading, writing, learning a new language, playing an instrument, or playing puzzles and games will keep your brain stimulated. These activities can improve processing speed, planning, reaction time, decision making and short-term memory.

4. Learn a new hobby

Everyone has a personal wish list of activities or skills they want to learn. This is the time to dust off your bucket list and pursue lifelong goals, be it sewing, painting, gardening, or cooking.

5. Care for a pet

Pet ownership has many physical and emotional benefits. Pets can help keep us active and busy and offer companionship and a lot of joy. If you do not want to or are unable to own a pet, you can ask to spend time with a pet owned by a family member, friend, or a neighbour.

6. Connect with supports in your community

- The Good Companions Seniors Centre offers programs for older adults and adults with physical disabilities including [Seniors' Centre Without Walls](#) (613-236-0428 ext. 2323) and a [Telephone Assurance Program \(TAP\)](#) 613-236-0428, extension 2235.
- [Rural Ottawa South Support Services](#) (ROSSS) (613-692-4697) Offers services for older adults in rural Ottawa South including meals on wheels, free grocery delivery, and the [Friendly Voice](#) (613-692-9992)
- [COVID-19 response site](#) is a website that offers community support services to help seniors and adults living with disabilities.

7. Ask for help if you feel unwell

It is important to ask for support when facing difficult situations. Some of the support available to you include:

- **Immediate crisis support** is available from [Distress Centre Ottawa](#) and Region 24/7 - 613-238-3311 (Bilingual). For children and youth ages 18 and under, please call **Youth Services Bureau's 24/7 Crisis Line** at 613-260-2360 or 1-877-377-7775 (toll free for Eastern Ontario)
- [AccessMHA](#) helps adults to find support for mental health and substance use. Go to [AccessMHA.ca](#) and fill out the online form to get started.
- Use [1Call1Click.ca](#) to access support for anyone under 21 years of age. You can call 613-260-2360 or 1-877-377-7775 (toll free for Eastern Ontario) or use 1call1click website to fill the online form.
- [Counselling Connect](#) provides quick access to a free phone or video counselling session. Go to [counsellingconnect.org](#) to book an appointment.
- The [Walk-In Counselling clinic](#) offers free counselling support without an appointment in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Somali, Cantonese, and Mandarin. Call 613-755-2277 for locations and availability.

For more support and information visit [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDMentalHealth](#) or call **Ottawa Public Health Information Centre** at **613-580-6744**.



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