

***Promoting the Health of Older Adults:
The Canadian Experience***

Instructor's Manual

**Compiled by Frances Grunberg, Peggy Edwards,
Irving Rootman, Mélanie Levasseur,
and the contributing authors**

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SAMPLE

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Introduction

This manual provides some learning activities related to each chapter and personal reflection in the book. They include classroom discussions, essay topics, and take-home assignments that instructors can adapt for undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, professional, and in-service learners.

Our hope is that instructors will add their innovative teaching ideas, resources, and strategies to this manual to enrich the learning opportunities for students and to incorporate new ideas and case studies as the field considers, learns from, and adapts to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other developments in promoting the health of older adults.

Instructors and students may want to refer to the Further Resources on the website for this book (www.canadianscholars.ca/books/promoting-the-health-of-older-adults/further-resources) for use in these activities and other learning assignments.

SAMPLE

Chapter 1

A Portrait of Aging and Older Adults in Canada

Peggy Edwards

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the demographic characteristics and key factors related to health status and the determinants of health of older people in Canada.
2. Assess the context for developing health promotion research, strategies, policies, and practices that promote the well-being and independence of older people in Canada.
3. Analyze how demographic and health status information inform our knowledge about the inequities faced by select population groups, gender differences, cultural influences, factors in the broad determinants of health, and the intersectionality of factors (e.g., age, socioeconomic status, and living arrangements).

CLASSROOM SUGGESTIONS

1. Class Discussion

- a) Watch “Life Lessons From 100-Year-Olds” (13.29 minutes) at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AThycGCakk>

Ask students to comment on this engaging video and what these three centenarians say about their most valuable life lessons.

- b) Watch “How to Age Gracefully” (4:40 minutes) at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sycgL3Qg_Ak

Ask students to comment on the video and the advice people gave at different stages in the life course. Which words of advice particularly struck a chord with them? What words of wisdom would they give to someone five years younger than themselves? Use the format in the video: “Dear __ year old ... Signed a __ year old.”

2. Small Group Discussion

- a) Ask students to brainstorm and list the key trends in aging demographics presented in this chapter. Collect and note their answers as a whole group. They will likely come up with the following key trends: the rapid aging of the population; the influence of the baby boomers; the 2016 turning point (more seniors than children); age 85-plus is the fastest growing segment of senior population/increase in centenarians; increased diversity of

older population (race and ancestry); women living longer than men, although this is changing; and variations on where seniors live (provinces/territories and cities/rural areas).

Assign one or two trends to small groups. Ask them to discuss how these trends will affect living arrangements, family structures, and the need for health promotion and health services over the next 20 years.

Take up the discussion with the whole group.

b) Watch “200 Countries, 200 Years” (4:47 Minutes) at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbkSRLYSojo>

Ask students (alone or in small groups) to address the following questions:

- What does Professor Hans Rosling demonstrate about life expectancy and population income/wealth?
- What is the current life expectancy for Canadians (at birth and at age 65)? How has this changed over the last 100 years?
- Do you see our current life expectancy increasing further in the next 20 years? Why or why not?
- Besides economics/income and wealth, what other determinants of health will influence life expectancy in the next 20 years? Explain your answer.

ASSIGNMENT SUGGESTIONS

1. Applying data at the local level:

Look up the specific demographic information about age structures and seniors in your city and/or province or territory. In your location, what are the implications of this information for promoting health and preventing disease and impairments across the life course and especially in older age? (2–3 page report)

2. Understanding intersectionality:

Define *intersectionality*. Create three profiles of older adults (approximately 250 words each) that show how the intersectionality of factors (e.g., age, gender, socioeconomic status, living situation, race and ancestry of origin, social support or mistreatment, health behaviours, etc.) contribute to inequities in various populations of older adults.

Here is an example:

Mary is 73 years of age. She has lived with a low income all her life. When her husband died, she moved into her daughter's home because she could not afford the rent they were paying. In lieu of rent at her daughter's home, she contributes \$300 a month to the family finances. Mary is very much appreciated in the family

home because she looks after her grandchildren while her daughter goes out to work and helps with the cooking. She also continues to visit other residents in the long-term care home where her husband lived for his last year of life. He died leaving debts and no pension.

Mary was born in a rural area in Quebec and had nine siblings. She completed her Grade 12 (in English) and worked in precarious retail jobs from the age of 16 to 65 in Quebec and then in Ontario. Her total income is now from OAS, CPP, and the supplement for low-income seniors.

Mary has a heart condition and suffers from asthma and high blood pressure. She has quit smoking and eats a healthy diet. Mary never learned to drive. She relies on public transportation to get to appointments—the long-term care home she visits, stores, etc. This is time consuming and sometimes difficult because her daughter lives far out in the suburbs of the city. Mary met a nice man playing poker online and they have established a good long-distance relationship. She would like to meet him in person, but he lives in California and neither have the money to fly.

3. Life expectancy and the social determinants of health:

On June 30, 2021, the BC Medical Officer of Health reported at least 486 sudden and unexpected deaths—a 195% increase over the approximately 165 deaths that would normally occur in the province over a five-day period. Most of the excess deaths were heat related due to the staggering heat wave. “Most who died were seniors who lived alone,” she said, adding that they were found in “very warm homes with no ventilation.” Two years earlier, people died from an intense heat wave in Montreal. The people who died were predominately low-income, older, and living alone, and many had severe mental health illnesses, or chronic heart or lung disease.

Write an eight-page analytical paper addressing the following questions:

- Why are older adults more vulnerable to death during a heat wave? What conditions in the physical and social environments exacerbate this vulnerability?
- What is the role of climate change in the “warming” of Canada? Will it continue to escalate?
- What can cities and the public health system do to prevent deaths in heat waves?
- What advice would you give to older adults in terms of dealing with a heat wave?