

REVISED

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Supports and Barriers to Independent Living and Mental Wellness in Seniors and Persons with Disabilities



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Delta Edmonton South, Edmonton, Alberta

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Partnership Program

Recognize the partnership program's vision and leadership:

- Importance of area
 - Maintaining independence is a basic human right
 - This is a need to identify barriers and to determine the most effective services and programs for maximizing independent living in seniors and persons with disabilities facing mental health challenges

Inclusion Criteria for Literature Review

The literature review was limited to studies that involved seniors and persons with disabilities experiencing challenges to mental wellness. A key criterion for inclusion was a dependent measure related to mental wellness.

Persons with disabilities were generally defined as those experiencing physical or developmental performance limitations to independent living. This included those with acquired or congenital physical or developmental disabilities.

Review Process

- Health professionals, academics and students on the team brainstormed research questions in the context of the *Request for Proposals* and their clinical and academic expertise
 - Nine research questions were identified
 - Initial search results by students were reviewed by the team in context of clinical practice and academic expertise
 - health professionals and academics on the team also searched and submitted relevant articles

Research Questions

- What are the barriers to independent living?
- How is a physical disability a barrier to accessing mental health services?
- Does residency in long term care become a barrier to accessing mental health services?
- What are the barriers to independent living related to service access?
- How can services be better integrated and coordinated to facilitate independent living?
- How can continuity of care from crisis to other services be better integrated and coordinated?
- What safeguards mitigate risk and improve the safety of individuals transitioning across services?
- What services, programs, and/or models of support are most effective in enhancing independent living and mental wellness?
- What interventions prevent negative mental health outcomes?

Databases

- Medicine Ageline (Ovid)
Allied and Complementary Medicine Database (AMED)
Alt-HealthWatch
CAB Abstracts (Ovid)
CINAHL Plus with Full Text
Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) Reviews
Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) Reviews - Cochrane Controlled (Ovid)
Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) Reviews - Cochrane Database (Ovid)
Health & Psychosocial Instruments (HAPI) (Ovid)
Health & Wellness Resource Center
HealthSTAR(Ovid)
History of Science, Technology, and Medicine
International Pharmaceutical Abstracts (Ovid)
MEDLINE (Ovid)
PILOTS (Published International Literature on Traumatic Stress)
PubMed

SAGE Health Sciences



**Alberta Health
Services**
David Thompson
Health Region



Databases

Nursing

Allied and Complementary Medicine Database (AMED)
Alt-HealthWatch
CINAHL Plus with Full Text
Health & Wellness Resource Center
Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition
HealthSTAR (Ovid)
SAGE Health Sciences

Psychology

Child Development and Adolescent Studies
Health & Psychosocial Instruments (HAPI)(Ovid)
PILOTS (Published International Literature on Traumatic Stress)
Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection
PsycINFO (Ovid)
SAGE Psychology

Databases

Social Sciences

Abstracts in Social Gerontology
Ageline (Ovid)
Alternative Press Index
Anthropology Plus
Bibliography of Native North Americans
CPI.Q. - Canadian and international periodicals
Family & Society Studies Worldwide
Family Studies Abstracts
Gender Studies Database
IBSS: Internation Bibliography of the Social Sociences
Oxford Journals
Sage Sociology
Social Services Abstracts
SocINDEX with Full Text
Sociological Abstracts (CSA)

Databases

Social Work

- Child Development and Adolescent Studies
- Family & Society Studies Worldwide
- Family Studies Abstracts
- SAGE Criminology
- Sage Sociology
- Social Work Abstracts
- SocINDEX with Full Text
- Sociological Abstracts (CSA)

Initial search generated 174 articles

Barriers to Independent Living

System Barriers

Adequacy of Resources

- Staff shortages (frontline care, mental health providers, specialists)
- High turnover of providers
- Lack of screening, assessment, referral services
- Lack of community mental health centers
- Lack of services for family caregivers

Barriers to Independent Living

System Barriers (Ctd)

Fragmentation of Services

- lack of coordination/collaboration between providers in primary care, long-term care and specialty mental health providers

Policy issues

- Limitations of guidelines and standard practices
 - E.g., emphasis on pharmacological interventions
- Lack of guidelines specific to community (versus institutional) services

Environment

- Architectural barriers
- Transportation barriers
- Unmet needs for assistive technology
- Barriers arising from terrain and weather

Barriers to Independent Living

Quality of Service Barriers

- Attitudes of Health Professionals to mental health (MH) problems
 - medical conditions viewed as priority, mental health is seen as secondary, unimportant
 - Attitudes may reflect adherence to biomedical model

Barriers to Independent Living

Quality of Service Barriers (Ctd.)

Lack of awareness/training for health professionals

- Inadequate recognition of MH symptoms, assumption that symptoms reflect disability/aging
- Poor MH screening and assessment
- Lack of professional caregiver knowledge/training about MH problems, issues, treatment
- Lack of involvement of individuals in decision making
- Inappropriate treatment
- Not adequately addressing communication barriers
- Lack of consideration for cultural perspectives on MH

• Lack of knowledge by MH professionals of physical impairment

Barriers to Independent Living

Individual/ Family Caregiver Barriers

- Beliefs, attitudes and stigmas of disability, aging, MH
- Personality Characteristics, Coping Style, Social Skills
- Caregiver Burden, caregiver physical and mental health
- Lack of social support network

Barriers to Independent Living

Societal Barriers

- Societal stigma/Attitudes about Mental Health, Disability, and Aging
 - Disability/Aging = helpless, powerless, vulnerable
 - Leads to being patronized, ignored, mocked, discriminated against
 - Impacts mental health

Integration of Service

- There is a clear indication in the literature that coordination and integration of primary care, mental health care in the community and long term care is essential to independent living and mental well being
 - Service silos; evidence indicates a lack of integration of consistent services across the community – institutional care continuum
 - Clear need for service coordinators
- Lack of research in this area: need to develop and evaluate models of service integration
 - Some attempts to bring counsellors and psychiatrists into collaboration with physicians have shown promise
 - Mental health centers partnering with community service organizations

Effective and Suggested Interventions

System Level

- Increase funding (e.g., recruitment/retention)
- Increase staff retention via interventions targeting job satisfaction, stress reduction
- Extend outreach and home-based services
- Coordinate assessment, referral, and treatment to achieve better MH outcomes.
- Enhance family caregiver support (e.g. respite)

Effective and Suggested Interventions

System Level (Ctd)

Policy issues

- Priority to non-pharmacological interventions
- More standardized screening and assessment for mental health concerns

Environment

- Number of studies demonstrate mental health /ADL benefits from environmental intervention (assistive technology, home modification).

Effective and Suggested Interventions Quality of Service

Need for education and skill development for health professionals to enhance knowledge of mental health priorities in seniors and persons with disabilities

- Attitude change interventions
- Awareness/skill training
- Enhance communication and conflict resolution
- Stress management skills
- Link self-efficacy enhancement to skill development

Effective and Suggested Interventions

Individual/Family Caregiver Interventions

- Dementia interventions: cognitive, behavioural, affect, ADL
- Conflict resolution skills training
- Self-efficacy, coping interventions
- Social skills training
- Stress management

Effective and Suggested Interventions

Societal Stigma/Attitudes about Mental Health, Disability, Aging

- Public education/awareness initiatives
- **Contact Initiatives**
 - Intergenerational Programs
 - Initiatives to involve seniors and persons with disabilities in volunteer, work and social environments
 - Community service learning

Summary

- numerous barriers have been identified.
- Integration of services is a clear priority though few integration strategies are evident in the literature
- Evidence supports a variety of interventions that will enhance independent living and improve mental wellness

Questions

