



Roadmap for Informed Decision-making as You Age

An Educational Process to Understand Decision-making and Resources for Independence

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Forward

The Roadmap for Informed Decision-making as You Age project was initiated as a result of funding by New Horizons for Seniors. It began May 1, 2014 and was completed in February, 2015. The project was fact-finding in nature and involved participatory group forums comprised of older adults.

This project was both a fact finding exercise to determine what the various circumstances are that change in later life and an educational program developed and delivered for seniors in three (3) areas across Ontario: (i) rural Ontario - Essex County, (ii) urban centre - Toronto and (iii) rural/urban (northern Ontario) - Sudbury.

Hence, the participatory group forums provided the information required to make informed decisions for older adults as their circumstances changed and provided the opportunity for participants to contribute feedback on the tools/resources offered during these sessions.



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Roadmap for Informed Decision-making as You Age Project

Summary

The Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations' / *La Société des Organisations des Citoyens Aînés de l'Ontario* (OSSCO/SOCAO) mission is to improve the quality of life for Ontario's seniors by encouraging seniors' involvement in all aspects of society, keeping them informed on current issues, and focusing on programs to benefit an aging population. Throughout 2014, OSSCO/SOCAO undertook a project funded by a New Horizons for Seniors' grant to develop and present educational workshops to older adults. The workshops were provided during forums comprised of seniors that were held to determine both the decision-making process of older adults and the needed resources they identified to maintain independence as they age.

Overview and Background

Throughout the past several years, OSSCO/SOCAO received numerous requests from seniors and/or their family members to gather information and assistance to help them make informed decisions to handle their life changing circumstances. Consequently, it became clear to OSSCO/SOCAO staff that there was an educational need in the community to teach older persons about the process for effectively making these much needed informed decisions.

To make this possible, staff rationalized that one needed to identify his or her starting point based on the type of life situation being experienced relative to the current resource tools available to meet that need. This was especially important for older adults and their families who have had little or no experience within the human services or health-care sector framework.

Ultimately, this educational need impelled OSSCO/SOCAO to hold a fact-finding project resulting in a two-part project goal: one, to determine the various needs that arise from changing situations seniors face and second, to determine the benefits of the educational component older adults received during the forums.



Educational Presentation by Type of Community

The educational process provided an opportunity for older adults in rural, urban/rural, and a large urban centre to learn how the decision making process changes with age and to create an understanding of the typical decisions one makes at this stage of life. As well, it was important to understand if the barriers or problems seniors encountered in the decision making process were the same regardless of where they lived. Lastly, it was important to identify if there were differences in informational needs in rural, rural/urban, or large urban centres in Ontario that affected the decision making process and one's ability to access services or programs.

Three (3) communities were selected because of their ability to represent attributes which could pose challenges to the decision making process or what was needed in terms of information to do so. These communities were:

1. Essex County residents to represent rural Ontario;
2. Toronto residents to represent large urban Ontario; and
3. Greater Sudbury Areas residents to represent rural/urban Ontario

Level of Seniors' Involvement in the Process

Seniors participated throughout the project in a variety of roles. They served on the oversight committee, filled facilitation or engagement roles, organized and promoted the educational program, and provided facility and meeting support. Likewise, seniors participated in the educational and feedback sessions.



Section A: Roadmap Project

OSSCO/SOCAO in partnership with community groups organized three (3) education days with feedback gathering sessions included in the process. The goal was to invite a cross-section of seniors in different Ontario communities to determine what resources are needed for them to make a decision when life's circumstances change, and to learn how they dealt with it.

OSSCO/SOCAO wanted to achieve a common understanding, by community, of what seniors need and to create one resource tool, if possible.

Rural Experience. The first education session was held in rural Ontario by working with the Leamington and District Half Century Centre in Essex County, in which twenty eight (28) seniors participated. Fifteen (15) older adults were involved in the educational day, seven (7) were involved in the educational program development, four (4) volunteered on the education day and two (2) served as group facilitators.

Urban Centre Experience. The second education day was held in an urban centre. Working in partnership with the seniors group at the Jamaican Canadian Centre in Toronto, one hundred and nine (109) seniors participated. This included nine (9) seniors involved in the program development feedback, eleven (11) volunteers supported the education day and nine (9) older adults facilitated groups.

Rural/Urban Experience. The third educational day was in a rural/urban setting in Sudbury at the Royal Canadian Legion where seventy seven (77) seniors participated. Two (2) groups in Sudbury took the lead in the program development feedback – Friendly to Seniors and CARP Sudbury Chapter. Five (5) volunteers supported the educational day program. Lastly, twelve (12) table facilitators were selected at the start of the educational program.

Workshop Program Concept

Each education day had a common structure. The program consisted of a universal presentation on the decision making process, to raise awareness of how this process changed as we age due to changing life circumstances or dealing with an unknown. Participants were next



given a common understanding of the decision making process at this stage of life, and then shared their experiences. Table facilitators were used to lead discussions.

To learn of the commonalities that existed among each setting, the Roadmap Project Committee developed five (5) key questions for exploration in each region following the educational component presentation. Throughout all sessions, a modified Knowledge Café style conversation was used. Thus, each community responded to five (5) topics, followed by learnings from previous sessions thereby building on the knowledge gathered from different parts of Ontario, as well as identifying common areas of importance. There were volunteers in each region to support the day's activities and lead the table conversations. Conversations were used to determine the key information seniors required as they venture through the aging process and how they could easily access this information to make informed decisions.

Facilitation Process for Fact Finding Consultation

The Roadmap Project Committee decided that the best approach to gather feedback from participants was to use the Knowledge Café style of conversation. With a facilitator for each table, the participants would feel comfortable in informal small group settings. They could voice their opinions directly to the facilitator and/or choose to write their thoughts on paper or onto the table where craft paper was placed for that purpose. Facilitators would present their table's summary based on the second topic of the day.

Pre-selected facilitators in Essex County and in the Greater Toronto areas were assigned to each table of approximately eight (8) to ten (10) participants. The facilitator would present the topic and participants would have a conversation. The facilitator recorded the conversations onto flip charts. The primary role of the facilitator was to ensure that there was a summary of key points discussed from each table and that all participants would be given the opportunity to contribute within the group setting.

After fifty (50) minutes of table conversations, facilitators presented their group's summary in a plenary session. Flip charts with conversation summaries were displayed at each table. Over the meal break, participants were asked to go around the room to view the various



flip chart summaries and place a coloured sticky note onto the points they felt was the most important issue to them. The afternoon's topics were comprised of the points with the highest number of sticky notes beside them.

In the Sudbury experience, facilitators were selected on the day of the education day. The facilitators led the conversations, recorded comments and reported back to the full group. With a show of hands, the participants then identified the key areas of information needed to remain independent as they dealt with changing life circumstances.

Following each conversation, a summary of the participants' feedback on the discussed topics was gathered. Likewise, in keeping with the spirit of the Knowledge Café style, information from all three (3) sessions was compiled listing the common topics and basic resources needed to make an informed decision.

Resource Tool Selection

Following each educational session, a sample of several resource tool options was suggested to participants, i.e., a bookmark, a flip booklet or a panel brochure. In each community, seniors recommended a panel brochure as their tool of choice due to ease of use, access and cost effectiveness.

Based on the participants' recommendations, the Roadmap Project Committee decided on a resource tool consisting of a three (3) panel colour brochure that folded inwards (*Appendix D*). Three thousand (3000) copies of this brochure were printed and distributed to communities where the educational sessions were held. Locations for distribution included senior's centres, retiree groups, community centres, and libraries.

Participant Targets Per Community

The project committee's goal was to attract a total of two hundred (200) seniors across Ontario to participate in a total of three (3) educational days. To achieve that goal, the committee targeted fifty (50) participants in both rural and rural/urban Ontario in each education day and one hundred (100) participants in Toronto. Participants were recruited through a variety of ways,



i.e., media announcements, direct mail, email blasts, community posters, partnership with other seniors organizations or groups, and word of mouth. OSSCO/SOCAO member organizations (150 organizations and 140+ individual members) received notification via email and/or mail. Additionally, the information was posted on external websites such as SNAPd.

First educational session. The first education session was held on August 11, 2014, in Essex County. Although extensively promoted in the media, online, and direct contact through seniors' groups and community service providers, only fifteen (15) older adults and service providers participated in the education day. There were no indications according to the attendees' feedback as to why the participation rate was low for this session.

Second educational session. The second education session was held in Toronto on September 30, 2014 with a target of eighty (80) older adults.

Third educational session. The third education session was held in Sudbury on December 3, 2014, with a target of fifty (50) seniors to participate.

In all, seniors participated in a broad variety of ways in this fact-finding project. They attended meetings, planned sessions, participated in feedback gathering sessions, facilitated group tables, set up rooms, served lunch at venues, and participated at feedback gathering sessions. Finally, the attendees recommended the type of Roadmap Resource Tool and level of information that they required to assist them in making an informed decision concerning a broad variety of circumstances.

Engaging Seniors in Program Participation

The Roadmap Project Committee was comprised of seven (7) ***senior*** members. With their input, a poster was designed. This poster was part of the promotion strategy to attract older adults to the educational and feedback sessions. The information poster was available through OSSCO/SOCAO's website and in each of the venues to attract people within the communities where the sessions were being held.



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A call for volunteers to serve as table facilitators was done through OSSCO/SOCAO's website and via contact through its membership base. This resulted in a total of nine (9) table facilitators of which many of the facilitators had previously volunteered. To ensure that each facilitator had the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to adequately facilitate a group, they attended a "refresher" facilitator training session and were provided with a guide for the role. Overall, the group of facilitators were volunteers who were either older adults or individuals who worked regularly with seniors. Lastly, facilitators were asked to observe participants and provide feedback on what they observed.

Section B: Overview of the Results

Standard Educational Program

The educational program was structured to be identical for rural Ontario, Essex County; the large urban centre, Greater Toronto Area; and the rural/urban centre, the Greater Sudbury region. An educational component created the basis for a shared understanding among attendees while the feedback process provided the opportunity for seniors to identify both the information and the barriers to it that was required for informed decision-making. The day was organized to support and encourage maximum participant contribution in a welcoming environment. Information was gathered by table and shared in a plenary session. For each community, it was decided that the facilitators would change tables and topics rather than having the older adults change tables, if the need arose. The results of each Knowledge Café were shared with the next community. For example, Essex County summaries were shared with Toronto participants. Essex County and Toronto summaries were shared with the Sudbury participants.

The Roadmap Project Committee developed five (5) topics for discussion and exploration. In the case of Toronto and Sudbury where there were more participants than topics, the project committee identified which of these required further exploration.



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The five (5) topics were:

- Topic 1: What challenges have you, your family or friends experienced and would like to have known resources about in order to deal with these? For instance, discuss the type of barriers to asking for help, i.e., the mixed bag of emotions, concerns, issues including access to programs or services, lack of programs or services?
- Topic 2: What is needed in our communities to be better for older adults to live without risk and have access to information, resources, programs and services to make it age friendly and appropriate?
- Topic 3: What specific actions can we take – either as individuals or as groups– to achieve, build, ensure awareness of what is available to assist us through the various stages of aging including end of life issues?
- Topic 4: What type of support or information is needed to help us deal with things that come up that are unexpected? Where would you source these and in what format do you need it? For example, draws out what participants want to express, what they know now that they wish they had known earlier, resources and support. What new skills, knowledge, expertise is needed to navigate the next stages of retirement living?
- Topic 5: Sometimes we think there are no options available to us or we do not feel we need to consider future options (planning). Discuss how people at this stage in our lives make decisions? For example, how participants sort out and define a problem, how they set a goal (something they want to achieve), how they identify and explore alternatives, acknowledging that the decision is up to the individual as well as understanding that the person has to accept responsibility for his/her decision.



Recognizing Community Uniqueness

By using the five (5) questions to guide the process, the participants were given an opportunity to identify both their primary concerns that prevented them from making an informed decision and what they felt was needed to enable them to do so. The feedback session structure provided an opportunity to reflect the uniqueness of each community.

Sudbury participants had table facilitators selected on the education day whereas in the other two (2) communities, facilitators were pre-selected and trained prior to the education day. In the Sudbury experience, facilitators led the conversations, took notes and reported back as to the priority issues by table, before the consolidation of information took place. In the other communities, facilitators provided all of the feedback from the tables they hosted. While consistency was important, it was also vital to acknowledge the differences among rural, rural/urban, and large urban communities.

In keeping with the spirit of the Knowledge Café style, tables were covered with craft paper, and markers were provided so that participants would jot down their thoughts or draw out issues. In Essex County and the Greater Toronto region, each table was provided with a flip chart to capture the participants' comments.

Promotion for Program Engagement

In Essex County, the educational workshop was well promoted on community websites and to every senior's organization and group in the county. Unfortunately it drew the fewest number of participants. Toronto attracted the largest number of participants, with the educational day being capped at eighty (80) participants. Even so, thirty (30) participants were turned away despite having the least amount of promotion for this day. Sudbury had seventy-seven (77) participants from partner organizations, i.e., Friendly to Seniors and CARP. The Sudbury region promoted the education day to their members via local newspapers and online.



Format

The education and feedback sessions were planned to be four (4) hours plus a one (1) hour lunch. Results from the table discussions were captured on flip charts and posted on the walls for review. Issues identified as “priorities” were consolidated for additional discussion. As well, there were parking lot issues identified for further consideration.

In the Sudbury experience, the workshop was compressed into a two and a half (2½) hour activity rather than four (4) hours. Groups reviewed a question designed for the specific context and desired purpose as selected by table participants.

In all three (3) communities, several participants provided anecdotal examples of what they liked, what had been helpful to this point in their lives in making informed decisions when dealing with changed circumstances, and even what could be learned from other jurisdictions in addition to disclosing personal experiences. They shared their concerns about making knowledgeable and informed decisions when they were unsure that they could trust the facts that they were given or unclear as to where to find the best information for their situation. Through discussion, 10% of participants indicated they were hesitant to make a decision when dealing with life changing or new situations.

The results from the conversations and summaries can be found as (*Appendix C*).

Understanding What is Needed for Informed Decision-making

Even though the geographical communities varied, the challenges to find the answers to life's changing circumstances were very similar. Certain areas in southwestern Ontario lacked the physical resources such as having nearby government service centres or health care facilities. One example of this is in Windsor-Essex where services are not truly available to county residents, i.e., there are boundaries between service providers and distance, whereas urban Toronto may have more services and centres but seniors still have the challenge of figuring out what services are available and where to go for assistance for a specific issue because the starting point is unclear.



Some of the top concerns were: how to find access to info on health care, affordability of services, including transportation, accessibility of Service Providers, language barriers to obtaining services in their native languages, and availability of transportation. While several seniors expressed challenges related to finding information about services and programs and not knowing where to begin or what is available, many seniors' organizational services or support that they need. The issues then became one of rights, for example, how to learn what you are entitled to receive, advocacy and who can ensure that you received it. Another question is of accountability, who is responsible to ensure that you receive the correct service or support?

A government services telephone number similar to 911 or 211 established specifically for seniors queries was identified as being a good first step and as well as a senior's web portal. It became clear through the educational process that the introduction of new informational telephone services such as 211 or 511 were unknown in the three (3) communities the educational programs were provided. Furthermore, in the case of 211, it was voiced by 30% of participants in amongst the three (3) communities that this service did not provide information to assist them with informed decision-making.

Section C: Next Steps

Starting PointCommunity Outreach

This project has been a starting point to raise awareness and understanding by sharing this written report with OSSCO/SOCAO's one hundred and forty (140) member organizations and one hundred and forty plus (140+) individuals as well as community stakeholders and policy influencers. This will continue to focus attention to aging and provide a better understanding of what older people face in dealing with changing life circumstances, and what is needed to make the most appropriate and informed decision.

The Ministries identified by participants as being the “holders” or “owners” of the information were expressed as being responsible in ensuring the information was accurate, and timely. These Ministries will be provided with a copy of this report and tool.



Developing, printing, distributing and providing online the resource tool will act as a starting point for individual seniors, seniors' organizations and service providers in Essex County, Greater Toronto Area and Greater Sudbury Region.

Sharing the report will entail providing it by mail, electronic format or through meetings with select stakeholders and policy influencers such as the federal Minister of State (Seniors), Minister Responsible for Seniors (Ontario), Minister of Health and Long Term Care, LHHIN Collaborative, Ministry of Transportation, Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres, and 211Ontario.

The report will be available on OSSCO/SOCAO's website with the resource tool under the Information and Referral section of its website. Presentations on the resource tool and development will be done to increase awareness, including availability through the Toronto and Sudbury Library systems.

Participant Recommendations and Insight

One of the biggest challenges brought up by the participants overall was that they were not aware of *where to find information* when they needed it. They expressed frustration in not knowing where to go for help or not knowing their rights on matters that became important to them as they age. This makes it difficult to make an informed decision about needed resources and knowing one's rights. Also programs and services were *not available consistently within a community* or amongst communities providing additional burden to make an informed decision in response to changing life circumstances.

Many people wait until a challenge presents itself, such as requiring medical tests or a change in their housing situation, before taking action and at that point it becomes an urgent



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matter and finding the information in a timely manner to resolve an issue becomes the bigger challenge.

The *language barriers* that exist to finding information were at the top of the list as well as simply accessing information. If you do not have a computer or if you do have access to a computer, but do not know how to navigate the Internet to locate the information in the myriad of links and webpages within a website, it can be *difficult to locate the resources* you may know you need. Print information while still identified as optimum, was expensive to produce and difficulty to distribute.

One suggestion was to have a *senior specific Helpline* instead of the current 211 or 311 options and made available in a variety of languages. Seniors also want *one-stop shopping* for information and for government services. Many government and health services are at multiple locations and take a lot of time, energy and money to get to appointments. It was commented that *shared counters – Service Canada, Service Ontario with a Municipality* was an optimum vision.

Concerns were raised about *reduced funding to government programs* and health services which causes long wait times for services, medical tests and surgeries and in some cases the disappearance of services altogether. Often, these reductions were not made public, and the seniors expressed frustration with this lack of information or knowledge provided.

Seniors would like a *non-political Ombudsman* to advocate for them and look after their best interests when they felt they could not receive services or information about the services available. They feel that they need someone to *help them navigate* through the “system”. As mentioned before, they want “one-stop shopping” as a public service that keeps in mind seniors’ needs.

In rural, rural/urban and large urban settings, consistently, participants expressed that they wanted to know *who is responsible to tell them what is available* and who is responsible, by



Ministry or program, for all of the information that is out there from policy making through to direct service delivery to the client.

Section D: Conclusion

Learning, Sharing and Outcomes

The Roadmap for Informed Decision-Making has undoubtedly achieved its goal, which was to provide educational programming and to learn what seniors in rural, rural/urban and large urban settings needed in order to make informed decisions while dealing with changing life circumstances.

In doing so, this project has demonstrated how senior citizens can take a positive, proactive approach when developing a common understanding of the ways the decision-making process changes as we age, and to contribute their thoughts as to what they need to deal with new circumstances. Participants in three (3) communities in Ontario at the New Horizons for Seniors funded event truly epitomized the role of active seniors and being aware of what is needed to remain independent.

The participant table summaries from the educational programs in three (3) communities provide government, planners and community groups with insight on recommended changes to help an older person remain active, and independent.

The outcome is a resource tool with information applicable to all Ontarians that provides solutions not only to the older adult and their families, but to community service providers and professionals.



Appendix A – Forum Promotion Awareness and Target Participants

OSSCO/SOCAO needed to attract a group of seniors representing their communities for three sessions in the following Ontario three (3) communities across Ontario: (i) rural Ontario - Essex County, (ii) urban centre - Toronto and (iii) rural/urban (northern Ontario) - Sudbury. This required a slightly different approach in each of the communities reflecting the uniqueness of each community.

Essex County: Program at the Leamington and District Half Century Centre

Invitations were sent to the following senior's centres in Essex County:

- Essex Retirees Social Club, Essex
- Essex Community Services, Essex
- South Essex Community Council, Leamington
- Pride CK, Chatham-Kent
- Royal Canadian Legion, Belle River Branch 399
- Royal Canadian Legion, Essex
- Royal Canadian Legion, Leamington
- Royal Canadian Legion, Kingsville
- South Asian Centre, Windsor
- Tecumseh Golden Age Club, Town of Tecumseh
- Wheatley and District Friendship Club, Wheatley
- Windsor Pride Community, Windsor
- Windsor-Essex Senior Games, Windsor
- Amherstburg Community Services, Amherstburg
- Essex County Chinese Canadian Association, Windsor
- Multicultural Council of Windsor, Windsor
- New Canadian Centre of Excellence, Windsor
- Hudson Manor Retirement Residence, Tilbury
- La Chaumiere Retirement Residence, Lakeshore
- Leamington Mennonite Home and Apartments, Leamington
- Chez Nous Lodge, Stoney Point
- Chartwell Kingsville Court Retirement Residence, Kingsville
- Southgate Retirement Resident, Kingsville
- Harrowood Retirement Communities, Harrow
- New Beginnings Rest Home, Leamington
- Chartwell Leamington Court, Leamington
- Erie Glen Manor, Director of Marketing, Leamington



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- Community Living Essex, Essex
- Kingsville Friendly Club, Kingsville
- Kingsville Lions Club, Kingsville
- Comber Golden Age Club, Comber
- French Heritage Club, Stoney Point
- Active Lifestyle Centre, Chatham-Kent
- Life and Fifty, Windsor

OSSCO/SOCAO contacted the following media outlets to request a media release about the session at Leamington and District Half Century Centre

- Southpoint Sun
- Kingsville Reporter
- Essex Free Press
- Lakeshore News
- Snapd Windsor
- Connecting Windsor-Essex
- Cogeco Cable
- Blackburn Radio Stations
- Country 92.5 , CKSY 94.3
- AM 800

Toronto: Program at the Jamaican Canadian Centre

Registrants, one hundred and forty seven (147), from the Positive Active Aging Forum in October 2013 and registrants from past OSSCO/SOCAO workshops and events were invited by email. Emails were also sent to OSSCO/SOCAO's one hundred and seventy (170) member organizations. The Poster was on OSSCO/SOCAO's website and distributed at OSSCO/SOCAO events. Promotion was also done through the seniors group at the Jamaican Canadian Centre in addition to announcing the Roadmap feedback gathering sessions on SNAPd, a seniors' community newspaper.

Sudbury: Program at Royal Canadian Legion, Sudbury

John Lindsay, President Friendly to Seniors hosted the Sudbury feedback gathering session. There were seventy seven (77) senior participants, through joint promotion by Friendly to Seniors, CARP, Sudbury Chapter and Royal Canadian Legion.



The event was promoted through local media through television and print.

Appendix B – Sample Agenda

The following is an example of the agenda developed for the education day. It was repeated in all three (3) communities, with the only difference in Sudbury, where it was a compressed version.

AGENDA: ROADMAP FOR INFORMED DECISION MAKING AS YOU AGE

10:00am	Welcome – Executive Director Partner Organization
10:10am	Overview of the Day – Elizabeth Macnab, Executive Director, Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations
10:15am – 10:50am	Past Learnings on Decision Making for Maintaining Independence – Elizabeth Macnab
10:50am – 11:00am	Break
11:00am – 12:00pm	Knowledge Café Table Conversations Table 1: What challenges have you, your family or friends experienced and would like to have known resources about in order to deal with these? Table 2: What is needed in our communities to be better for older adults to live without risk and have access to information, resources, programs and services to make it age friendly and appropriate? Table 3: What type of support or information is needed to help us deal with things that come up that are unexpected? Where would you source these and in what format do you need it? Table 4: Sometimes we think there are no options available to us or we do not feel we need to consider future options (planning). Discuss how people at this stage in our lives make decisions?
12:00pm – 12:30pm	Facilitator Table Reporting – Summary of Conversations
12:30 – 1:00pm	Lunch and Voting
1:00pm – 1:30pm	Recommendations from morning session
1:30 – 1:50pm	Facilitator Table Reporting – recommendations



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1:50pm

Summary and Next Steps

2:00pm – 2:10pm

Thank you



Appendix C – Summary of Participant Responses

- 1) **Discuss the type of barriers to asking for help, i.e., the mixed bag of emotions, concerns, issues including access to programs or services, lack of programs or services?**
 - a. Lack of support from key resources when going from hospital to home, i.e., supplies issues, costs of services; CCAC community support and not keeping end user, i.e., age, education, activities, finances in mind
 - b. Lack of coordination between government services and programs, i.e., CCAC and community service providers, coordination between health care programs
 - c. Cultural and Language barriers so that there may be a service, but not culturally/linguistically sensitive
 - d. Language barriers prevent ease of access to professionals, i.e., doctors, nurses, teachers
 - e. Cost/income/education
 - f. Where does one get assistance to find someone to care for a person in the home? There is a lack of adequate access to PSW's and frustration with level of care provided. List includes language barriers, waiting list for PSW and lack of respect for patient and level of training provided to PSW's.
 - g. Not knowing where to go for help or not knowing one's rights on matters, would like a Helpline. Partly due to language barrier and isolation, don't know where to go or who to call for services.
 - h. Unable to afford the services that are available or unable to access information due to computer illiteracy. Transportation is not affordable.
 - i. Concerned about reduced funding to gov't programs and health services. Emotional issues regarding why we are living so long, depressed, angry about not knowing where to get help.
 - j. Social, cost qualifications
 - k. Embarrassment, people want to feel independent
 - l. Language
 - m. Not wanting or thinking you need help, not comfortable acknowledging that they have a need or concern or are too proud to ask for help
 - n. Physical or mental disabilities
 - o. Lack of knowledge of services available, some people don't know what services are available
 - p. Lack of services and facilities like a P.E.T. scan



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- q. Consider all your problems just getting older, don't need help
- r. Transportation concerns, may not qualify for Handi Transit (new bus rules better)
- s. Sometimes the response given is lacking in courtesy and /or won't be provided
- t. Lack of information in community, or not current information

2) Sometimes we think there are no options available to us. Discuss how people at this stage in their lives make decisions?

- a. Community network, i.e., family, friends, MD's, people we rely on/someone to talk to
- b. Always looking for continuity of information in order to make a decision
- c. Using computers to find information, but, still need to find print copies because not everyone has a computer or knows how to use one.
- d. Need to know where to find the information, how much information is needed/available to make an informed decision
- e. Right information
- f. Seniors group in networks – family, friends, clubs, social activities, etc.
- g. More affordable services such as transportation, lower taxes, housing, funeral costs, physiotherapy.
- h. More reduced cost gov't services are needed
- i. Vouchers for transportation
- j. Subsidy for low income funeral cost, lack of info on this
- k. Remove HST for funeral costs
- l. CPP death benefit should not be taxable
- m. Increase senior discounts
- n. Lower taxes for seniors
- o. Would like more assistance for household tasks like snow shoveling and housekeeping service
- p. What are our resources?
- q. What is our state of wealth?
- r. We make collaborative decisions of possible
- s. What are our options?
- t. Don't make a decision – hope someone else will do so
- u. Feel desperate



3) What type of support or information is needed to deal with things that come up that are not expected?

- a. Need a support network to be independent, i.e., family, friends, and be flexible to constantly change that network base
- b. Finding the solution might not solve the information dilemma, i.e., 211 was thought to fix the problem but did not
- c. Standardizing service standards and programs as these vary across the county, regions and provincial levels
- d. Ensure that the Ministry responsible for programs, i.e., healthcare communicates changes and roles clearly to the community
- e. Windsor – Essex Services are not truly available to county residents, i.e., boundaries between service providers, distance
- f. Increase opportunities for frontline workers to learn of available services other than their own companies
- g. Computer accessibility
- h. Need better networking
- i. Access to specialists within a reasonable time frame
- j. More advocacy from organizations, individuals and gov't
- k. OSSCO/SOCAO needs to make itself more well-known and within easy reach
- l. Seniors need to educate themselves and advocate using word of mouth
- m. More attention paid to language barrier so seniors can access information and making interpreters accessible
- n. Service Ontario and Service Canada to provide better information and services overall
- o. Relevant and up-to-date financial information
- p. Experts that know about the particular topic
- q. Support for the emotional part of unexpected situations
- r. Workshops on various topics, geared to seniors
- s. Make sure the information is clearly communicated to seniors and where seniors can easily find it
- t. You don't know what you don't know

4) What challenges have you or your family or friends experienced and would like to have known about resources in order to deal with these? What specific actions can we take – either as individuals or as groups – to achieve, build, ensure awareness of



what is available to assist us through the various stages of aging including end of life issues?

- a. Challenges of decision making as we age – might need updated information as things change over the years; results in needing more or less information. We're not made aware of where to find it or how the change affects us, therefore making it difficult to make an informed decision about needed resources, your rights
- b. Need to learn how to be more self-advocating or have someone, i.e., family members who can do so for you so that you get what you are entitled to remain independent
- c. Gender issues –women of the current generation may not be the primary decision makers in a relation; men won't do anything until it's too late
- d. Age barriers to treatment or choice e.g. end of life care – like to have known more before making a decision, and long wait times for service because of your age, i.e., lab work, surgeries, tests, or lack of medical intervention info prevents you from making right decision
- e. CCAC does not respond adequately to the needs of people on a regular basis, i.e., months before if ever that they get back to the caller
- f. Standardizing programs and services to that they are truly available to all residents in the county / Ontario
- g. Making sure that whoever controls the information puts their responsibilities and client rights in writing for everyone to know
- h. Quality programs relevant to the client, i.e., regular program evaluation, matching correctly program to end user needs, cultural awareness, training of service providers on seniors needs/issues, partnering interministerial/interprogram
- i. Since access to much of the information for services is obtained online, seniors require more access to free computer and Internet training as they do not have the money to pay for course
- j. Seniors want solutions to isolation in the form of more free activities at seniors organizations, more variety of programs such as brain training activities



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- k. Transportation solutions, possibly a ride share volunteer program/car pool, so seniors can travel to appointments etc.
- l. Support system for people with special food requirements due to medical issues such as diabetes, educational programs on how to shop for one person, maybe a volunteer program
- m. Need more affordable, accessible housing
- n. Housing options close to required services
- o. Housing with safe, comfortable environment
- p. Medical care – transportation accessible to care
- q. Better transportation overall
- r. Opportunities for social interaction
- s. Health – services available from hospital to home
- t. CCAC programs and jurisdiction – what's available, rationale for different criteria for different people
- u. How much we would have to pay for when dealing with unplanned circumstances

5) What is needed in our communities be better for older adults to live without risk and have access to the information, resources, programs and services to make it age friendly and appropriate?

- a. Non-political Ombudsman who can advocate for you, look after your best interests
- b. Someone to help navigate you through the “system”
- c. One stop shopping/ as a public service and keeping in mind seniors needs
- d. Identify who is responsible by Ministry or program for all of the information that is out there from policy making through to direct service delivery to the client (end user)
- e. Cost of transportation, i.e., parking in hospitals/medical centres, need for graduated licensing
- f. Improved transportation, i.e., settlement programs may provide coverage for newcomer but once become Canadian, no longer have access to those funded programs



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- g. Housing issues – affordability
- h. Linguistic awareness – remember Ontario is diverse!
- i. Intergenerational programs, i.e., integration of seniors and youth programs
- j. Seniors are tired of fighting for things and want to know who is responsible to tell you what is available. They know they needed to be treated differently, i.e., mobility, hearing, vision issues, but what are elected official doing about it and why aren't people better trained to deal with the issues that seniors face
- k. Seniors want one stop shopping and they want better trained gov't or service staff
- l. Networking and sharing, a single access point to get info and a process for making complaints
- m. Reliable home care
- n. Suitable compensation for PSW's employed by Bayshore, Red Cross, We Care and similar agencies. It is a fiasco the way it is run today
- o. Coordinate Provincial and Federal gov't programs to facilitate making changes, i.e., address, death etc., rather than having to contact numerous departments as it is now
- p. Investigate nursing care in LTC homes – too many nurse changes daily, very unsettling for elderly, many lacking in care provided
- q. Have 911 for seniors only (211?)
- r. Improve handicap transit
- s. Have a seniors web portal
- t. Provide information so that the senior and service providers are current as to what is available in the community
- u. Standardize services amongst and within the CCAC/LHIN's
- v. Seniors have specific ideas on what they want such as:
 - i. More community centres
 - ii. Hotline to call for those depressed
 - iii. Cleaning person shared/paid by 20 seniors
 - iv. Identify low income housing options



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- v. Community dinners work a job for a few hours per week without pension drawback
- vi. Reduced bus fare at low peak times
- vii. Bartering of talents or tools for services
- viii. Use underutilized schools for programming



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Appendix D – Roadmap for Informed Decision Making

Link to the brochure: [Roadmap for Informed Decision Making.pdf](#)