



Living through the COVID-19 Pandemic: Personas and Scenarios developed by Older Adults and Caregivers



Canada's technology and aging network

HOW TO USE THIS DECK

A persona and scenario is a semi-fictional account that describes a person, situation or problem, with the goal of creating a potential solution.

This persona and scenario deck was created for everyone including:

- older adults and caregivers
- students and researchers
- technology designers and developers
- industry members
- community organizations
- government partners

You can use this deck in many ways, including to:

- spark conversation
- educate and train
- ideate new technology solutions
- support journey mapping exercises
- plan new programs
- inform policy

WHAT IS INSIDE?

Each persona includes background information such as:

- age
- location
- marital status
- employment status

Each persona also has a scenario description and current situation levels. For example, Cordelia's technology use is 4 out of 5 which tells us that she uses various technologies and is comfortable doing so.

Technology Use 

All personas and scenarios are categorized by [AGE-WELL's eight challenge areas](#), which are designed to move the dial when it comes to supporting older adults and caregivers in Canada, and achieving social impact. The eight challenge areas are:

Supportive Homes & Communities	Mobility & Transportation
Health Care & Health Service Delivery	Healthy Lifestyles & Wellness
Autonomy & Independence	Staying Connected
Cognitive Health & Dementia	Financial Wellness & Employment

CONTRIBUTORS

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For "Living under COVID-19 restrictions" paper, visit agewell-nce.ca



Dora

BACKGROUND

Age: 82

Lives in: Condo in Vancouver, British Columbia

Children: 4 daughters

Marital Status: Separated

Employment: Retired realtor

Owens a small dog

Has a stent due to recent minor heart attack

Supportive Homes
& Communities

Mobility &
Transportation

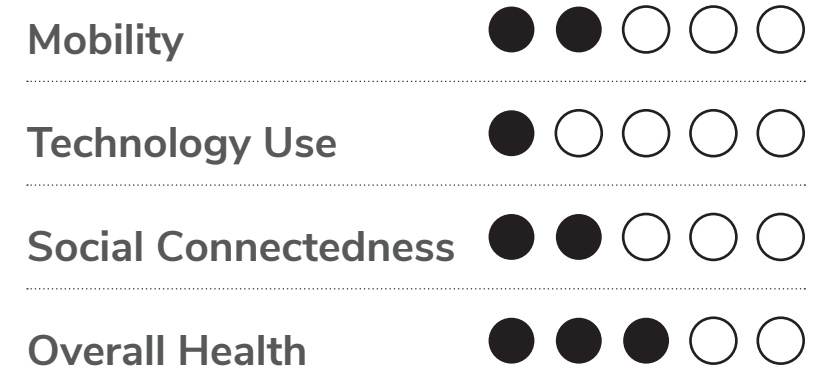
“I am so afraid about having another heart attack because of all this stress.”

“Will I be able to keep Fluffy if I have to move into a care facility?”

SCENARIO

- Under lockdown at home and daughters can't visit due to physical distancing guidelines
- Takes her dog for short walks but afraid of falling and fears having to give up her dog
- Concerned about memory loss

CURRENT SITUATION





John

BACKGROUND

Age: 79

Lives in: Care home in Quebec

Children: 2

Marital Status: Married

Employment: Retired

Uses a wheelchair

Has advanced dementia and aphasia

Health Care & Health
Service Delivery

Cognitive Health
& Dementia

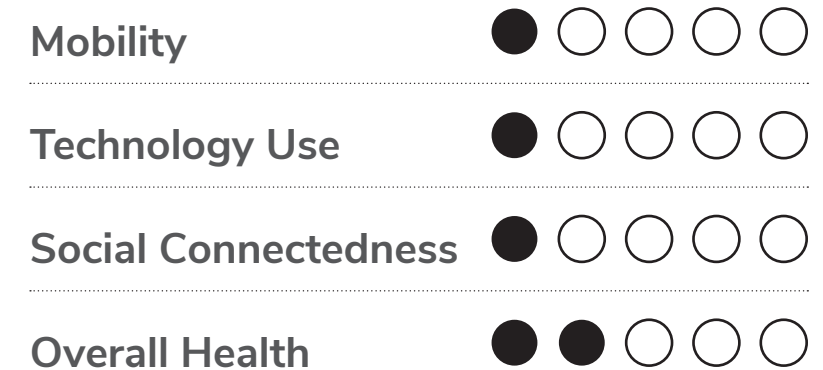
“We are essential partners in care and should be recognized as members of papa’s care team”
- John’s daughter

“I just want to hold his hand”
- John’s wife

SCENARIO

- Caregivers and support network aren’t allowed to visit facilities during COVID-19 outbreak
- Staff recognize the contributions of caregivers but cannot risk the potential spread of COVID-19
- Family is worried John will not remember them when they’re allowed to visit again and fears he may die alone

CURRENT SITUATION





Cordelia

BACKGROUND

Age: 83

Lives in: House in rural Atlantic Canada

Children: 5

Marital Status: Widowed

Employment: Part-time

Owns and drives vehicle

Has type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis and osteoporosis

Autonomy & Independence

Financial Wellness & Employment

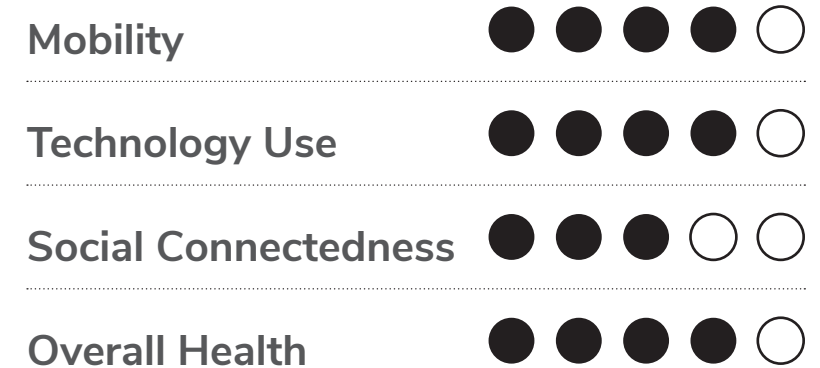
“I fear that it will get harder for me to age in place if I can’t to get out to my fitness classes and to see friends.”

“I am grateful that I can connect with others online. It is almost as good as being there in person.”

SCENARIO

- Shutdown of businesses, recreation centres and community groups make socializing opportunities limited and difficult to remain active
- Restricted and restrained family events and visits (e.g. backyard food exchanges, interacting through glass patio doors)
- Switched to professional videoconferences at part-time work

CURRENT SITUATION





Mark

BACKGROUND

Age: 60

Lives in: Condo in Edmonton, Alberta

Children: 2

Marital Status: Divorced

Employment: Retired

Has been living with Alzheimer's for 5 years

Highly engaged with local Alzheimer's society

Cognitive Health
& Dementia

Autonomy &
Independence

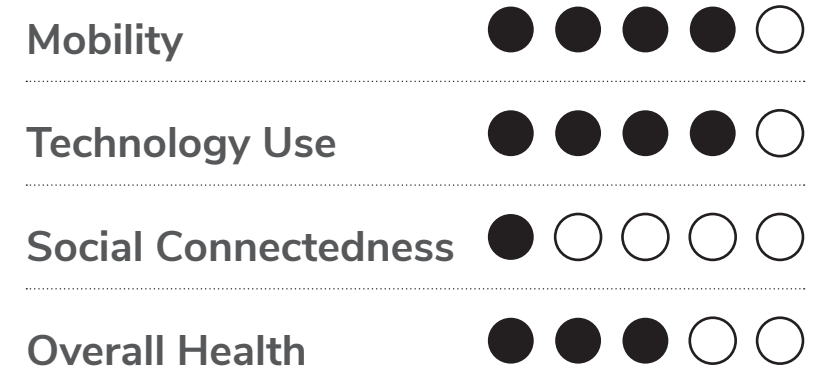
“Dementia when you think of it is a pandemic too, a pandemic within a pandemic but I am hopeful there are solutions.”

“I went for a walk yesterday and forgot about physical distancing guidelines and gave someone a scare when I said hello.”

SCENARIO

- Enjoys outdoor activities during warmer weather but sometimes forgets social distancing protocols, leading to negative reactions
- Cannot meet up with small in-person social network in the community
- Has personal friends involved in the health field who are overworked and have limited time for social interactions

CURRENT SITUATION





“I am scared to leave my apartment since I may get the virus and have to go to a hospital.”

“My sons may not be able to visit me if I end up in the hospital. I don’t want to die alone.”

Mary

BACKGROUND

Age: 72

Lives in: Apartment in Toronto, Ontario

Children: 2 sons

Marital Status: Divorced

Employment: Retired

Relies on government pension and Old Age Security for income

Has signs of frailty and is being observed for mild cognitive impairment

SCENARIO

- Afraid of getting confused and lost being out in the community, such as commuting to dance class at a local community centre
- COVID-19 has caused her to shelter in place and not leave home; avoids using elevator and common areas
- Family is concerned about Mary being physically and emotionally confined to home, unable to move freely outside her apartment

CURRENT SITUATION

Mobility	● ● ○ ○ ○
Technology Use	● ● ○ ○ ○
Social Connectedness	● ● ○ ○ ○
Overall Health	● ● ○ ○ ○

Mobility & Transportation

Staying Connected



Gary

BACKGROUND

Age: 78

Lives in: House in eastern Ontario

Children: 3

Marital Status: Married

Employment: Retired

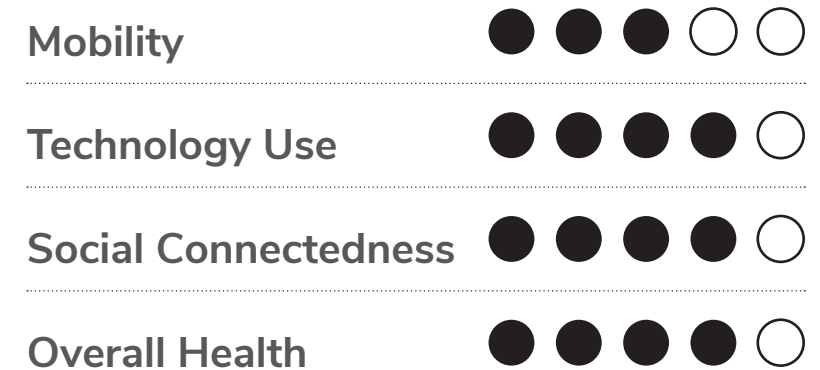
“Snowbird”; travels with wife to Mexico for the winter

Has hip replacements and mild arthritis

SCENARIO

- Finds it difficult to create structure in life during retirement; stays active and busy with social engagements
- COVID-19 forced an early return from abroad and two weeks spent in self-isolation
- Previously had routine doctor visits; now concerned about needing non-emergency doctor for support

CURRENT SITUATION



Healthy Lifestyles
& Wellness

Health Care & Health
Service Delivery

“Cabin fever is more of a problem than I thought. I didn’t realize I would miss people so much. Video calls only go so far.”

“I didn’t realize how much the gym kept me going. Without it, I don’t know how I will keep the weight off.”



Erin

BACKGROUND

Age: 71

Lives in: Small home in Yukon Territory

Marital Status: Married

Employment: Part-time (remote work)

High computer literacy

Wears glasses and has slightly diminished hearing

Staying Connected

Healthy Lifestyles
& Wellness

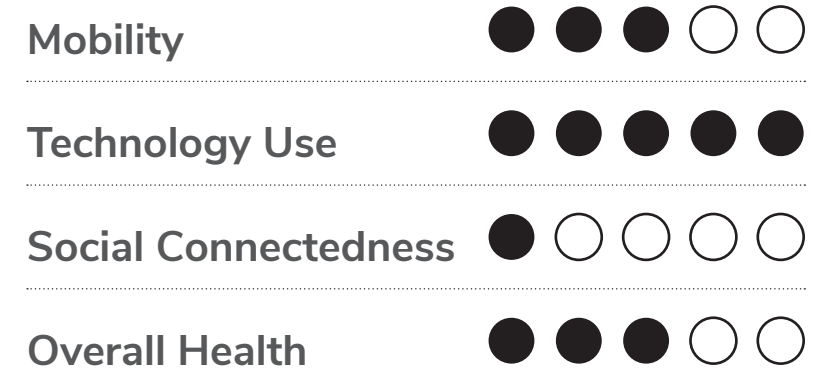
“Wouldn’t it be nice, if video chat could be as easy as a phone call? No special log-ins, passwords or complicated steps.”

“I wish I could see my friends in person but my partner wants us to be extra cautious and follow the guidelines.”

SCENARIO

- COVID-19 has put a strain on Erin’s marriage because they cannot gather with family, friends and co-workers, feeling cut off from relationships
- Computer literate but frustrated with different systems and setups; prefers video chats on larger screens
- Experimenting with different video chat solutions for personal and business contacts; all with varying degrees of success

CURRENT SITUATION





Dave

BACKGROUND

Age: 62

Lives in: House in rural Manitoba

Children: 2 (a son and a daughter); both live at home

Marital Status: Married

Employment: Laid off / unemployed due to COVID-19 pandemic

Wife continues to work as a nurse's aid at a local hospital

Has ongoing mortgage commitments

Financial Wellness
& Employment

Supportive Homes
& Communities

"The severance pay I have is only going to last me a few months. I wonder when this pandemic will end."

"I hope I don't have to retire early, the kids aren't done with their studies and they need my support."

SCENARIO

- Continues to assist children with university expenses
- Expected ongoing employment until age 70 for financial security for himself and family, but was unexpectedly laid off with severance pay due to being "non-essential" government staff
- Uncertain about future employment due to his specialized skill set and living in a smaller city

CURRENT SITUATION

Mobility	● ● ● ● ○
Technology Use	● ● ● ● ○
Social Connectedness	● ● ● ○ ○
Overall Health	● ● ● ● ○



Tamara

BACKGROUND

Age: 36

Lives in: Apartment in Regina, Saskatchewan

Marital Status: Common law

Employment: Unemployed due to COVID-19 pandemic

Cares for her mother who lives 30 minutes away

Lives with her partner

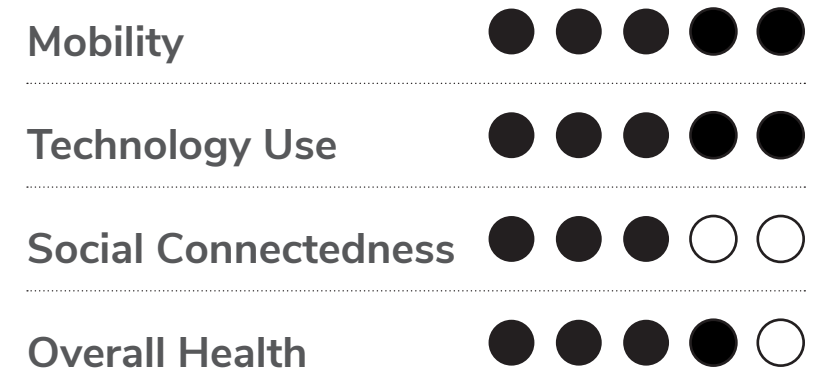
Financial Wellness
& Employment

Staying Connected

SCENARIO

- Primary caregiver for her mother who lives by herself, independently, with dementia
- Trying to move her personal trainer professional practice online, but has suffered loss of income
- Worries about her mother taking her medication, eating regularly and keeping mentally and physically active

CURRENT SITUATION



“I wish there was a way for me to make sure that mom had breakfast today.”

“Mom seems very down lately. I wonder if she is talking to her friends.”



Zahir

BACKGROUND

Age: 70

Lives in: Condo in Halifax, Nova Scotia

Children: 2 daughters

Marital Status: Widower

Employment: Retired and was supplementing pension by tutoring students

Lives with diabetes and a walking impairment due to severe arthritis

Healthy Lifestyles
& Wellness

Autonomy &
Independence

“I can’t seem to figure out how to use video calling or how to offer tutoring online. I wish I could learn these skills.”

“I miss my wife’s cooking, I just can’t make the same meals the way she used to.”

SCENARIO

- His eldest daughter is trying to teach him how to use video calling but he is struggling
- Gaining weight as he cannot access his condo gym during the pandemic
- Depending on a friend who delivers food and medications once a week including insulin

CURRENT SITUATION

Mobility	● ● ○ ○
Technology Use	● ● ○ ○
Social Connectedness	● ● ○ ○
Overall Health	● ● ● ○ ○