Living through the COVID-19 Pandemic: Personas and Scenarios developed by Older Adults and Caregivers
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
Owns a small dog
Has a stent due to recent minor heart attack

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

Mobility

Technology Use

Social Connectedness

Overall Health

“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?”
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

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

“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

CURRENT SITUATION

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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

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

“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.”

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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

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

“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.”

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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

"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."

CURRENT SITUATION

| Mobility | ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ |
| Technology Use | ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ |
| Social Connectedness | ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ |
| Overall Health | ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ⬤ |
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

“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.”

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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

**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

“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.”

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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

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

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

“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.”

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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

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

“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.”

CURRENT SITUATION
Mobility
Technology Use
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