

# SENIORS' HEALTH AND WELLNESS INSTITUTE (COSCO) PRESS KIT



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**SENIORSHelpingSeniors.ca**

**WE ARE**

**THE SENIORS' HEALTH AND WELLNESS INSTITUTE,  
A PARTNER OF**

**THE COUNCIL OF SENIOR CITIZENS' ORGANIZATIONS  
(COSCO), OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.**

**WE PROVIDE MORE THAN 40 FREE WORKSHOPS  
ABOUT GOOD HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR SENIORS**

Website: <https://seniorshelpingseniors.ca/>  
Email: [president@seniorshelpingseniors.ca](mailto:president@seniorshelpingseniors.ca)

## Our Story

Beginning in 2007 with a single workshop, the Institute has grown to where we are currently able to offer 46 free health and wellness workshops for seniors across BC and Canada. As of January 2022, we have presented over 3,000 workshops, which over 55,000 people have attended.

During the pandemic [COVID-19] we moved to an online model of presentation, offering the most popular workshops virtually. As of September 2021, we have been offering both in- person and online workshops. Requests are processed via our online booking system.



Our facilitators developed the PowerPoint presentations, which were authenticated by topic specialists before being presented to seniors. All of our volunteers are seniors themselves and have received training to become effective facilitators. We currently have more than 40 facilitators available to make these presentations. We always look forward to welcoming more.

Our workshops are interactive. Participants consider how they might make use of the information to help them maintain good health, wellness, and safety. Participants' suggestions are welcome; as we revise workshops, new ideas are incorporated.

The Institute's efforts to support health literacy among seniors have received accolades at national and international conferences and were incorporated in the findings outlined in *Researching Transitions in Lifelong Learning*.

How We Are Growing: With the help of our active group of facilitators, the Institute offers in person and online workshops across the province. Facilitators continue to hone their presentation skills at our annual Gather Share Learn sessions.



## Our Goals:

Our goal is to help seniors maintain good health and wellness. With the aid of our workshops, the Institute supports health and wellness literacy among seniors. Using an interactive format, we offer ideas and information, and encourage participants to consider optimal ways to take their thinking and learning forward. As noted, we value feedback received from participants. This allows us to continually enhance our workshops with new ideas and examples, making them even more personally relevant.

## Our Purposes



- (a) to promote the health and wellness of seniors
- (b) to establish and operate an institute dedicated to the prevention and relief of suffering or abuse of seniors;
- (c) to provide to persons who are over the age of 65, or who are over the age of 55 and in need of such services, information and training necessary to prevent or deal with abuse, injury and illness, legal requirements, and social or emotional isolation;
- (d) to provide direct assistance to such persons with respect to personal planning activity to prevent and / or respond to problems of abuse, illness, injury, legal matters, and social or emotional isolation;
- (e) to provide counselling and referral to appropriate agencies to such persons in respect of such problems associated with ageing;
- (f) to make such information, training and assistance accessible to seniors in the settings seniors find themselves, in the languages spoken by them, on the basis of "seniors helping seniors".

## Partnerships

Workshops are offered to seniors through our partnership with over 170 agencies that work with seniors. The host can request workshops as in-person sessions, or through the ZOOM virtual platform. The host agencies are responsible for coordinating our virtual workshops.

Recently Seniors' Health and Wellness has begun to offer workshops through ZOOM to individuals who may not have access to our workshops through other agencies. Several more themed groupings are being prepared for this purpose. In late 2021, we offered a series of six sessions focused on Personal Planning. Over 90 participants attended. While they are listed in the [Workshop Brochure Online](#), here is a sneak peek of the workshops and the series we offer

### WORKSHOP SERIES

**Personal Planning:** In this series we address the wide range of issues that are embedded in 'putting your affairs in order'. This gift of love to your family and friends takes considerable reflection, as well as the time and clear understanding to deal with all aspects both personal and legal. Workshops in the series are: [Personal Planning Overview](#),

[Advance Care Planning](#), [Representation Agreements](#), [Powers of Attorney](#), [Advance Directives](#), [Palliative Care](#), and [Wills](#).

**Diseases that Target Seniors** In this series, we explore some of the diseases seniors may get as they age, and we provide ideas on the management of both the illness and the related pain. Workshops in this series are [COPD \[Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease\]](#), [Chronic Diseases](#), [Skin Conditions](#), [Osteoarthritis](#), and [Parkinson's Disease](#).

**Health and Wellness:** As we age, our body changes. In this series we focus on steps to take to ensure we stay healthy. Workshops in this series are [Hearing Health](#), [Vision Health](#), [Sleep](#), [Knowing Your Bladder](#), [Age-Friendly Communities](#), [Social Connectedness](#), [Dealing with Conflict](#), and [Technology and Aging](#)



**Legal, Medical and Financial:** We explore the needs of the caregiver and the care recipient and how to navigate the health care and financial issues that both faces. Workshops in this series are [Advocacy](#), [Housing and the Care Continuum](#), [Care for the Caregiver](#), [Navigating the Emergency Department](#), [Navigating the Health Care System](#), [Financial Literacy](#), and [Pensions and Tax Options](#).

**Silent Threat:** In this series, we trace the effects of not dealing with stress in your life and the possible consequences of untreated stress including high blood pressure, stroke and what happens when you have a heart operation. Workshops in this series are [Osteoporosis](#), [Hypertension](#), [Memory and Aging](#), [Dealing with Stress](#), [Mental Health](#), [Stroke and TIA](#), and [Heart Operations](#).

**Safety:** In this series we focus on the ways seniors can protect themselves and their possessions. Workshops in this series are [Falls Prevention](#), [Safety in the Home](#), [Pedestrian Safety](#), [Life without Driving](#), [Emergency Preparedness](#), [Keeping Seniors Safe](#), and [Frauds and Scams](#).

**You are What you Eat:** In this series we focus on what seniors need to do to stay well. Workshops in this series are [Healthy Eating for Seniors](#), [Medication Awareness](#), [Age Well, Live Well with Safe Medication Use](#), [Identifying Addiction](#), and [Diabetes](#).

We also offer several workshops in Cantonese. Workshops in this series are [Mental Health](#), [Emergency Preparedness](#), [Frauds and Scams](#), [Age Well, Live Well with Safe Medication Use](#) and [Falls Prevention](#).



## STAND-ALONE WORKSHOPS

Detailed information about each workshop can be found at our website: [www.seniorshelpingseniors.ca](http://www.seniorshelpingseniors.ca) but here is a quick synopsis of each one.

### **Advance Care Planning**

This workshop outlines why planning is important and what your options are for preparing written documents for your future care.

### **Advance Directive**

Creating an advance directive takes the results of your advance care plan and outlines how you might proceed.

### **Advocacy for Caregivers**

Whether you are advocating for yourself or someone else, important skills, strategies and practical suggestions are presented.

### **Age Well, Live Well with Safe Medication Use**

As we age our bodies change and dosages of some medications may be too strong now, or may be less effective. This workshop will help you understand why that might be, and what actions you and your health care provider might consider so that your current medications meet the needs of your body.

### **Age-Friendly Communities**

This workshop will assist individuals and groups to promote community environments that support health and well-being, not only for older adults but for all citizens.

### **Care for the Caregiver**

We examine causes of caregiver burnout and suggest how to prevent it. Sources of assistance and support are reviewed.

### **Chronic Diseases**

The warning signs of four of the diseases that are most likely to affect the health of senior adults are outlined: cancer, diabetes, heart disease and lung disease. Early recognition is emphasized.

### **COPD [Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease]**

The workshop examines the potential causes and treatment options, including helpful breathing techniques.





## **Dealing with Conflict**

We offer tips on how to learn to manage conflict.

## **Dealing with Stress**

We help to identify and offer tips to handle sources of stress.

## **Diabetes**

Causes, possible preventative measures and managing Type 2 diabetes are discussed.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

We explore the preparation of emergency kits, safety procedures in dangerous situations and give information about when and how to seek help.

## **Falls Prevention**

We review the alarming impact falls have on the well-being of seniors and identify hazards that contribute to the likelihood of falls.

## **Financial Literacy**

This session provides an overview of how to handle and protect your money, including banking and borrowing.

## **Frauds and Scams**

We investigate the ways in which fraudsters take in people in order to rob them of their money and possessions.

## **Healthy Eating for Seniors**

How to use Canada's revised Food Guide and carefully read food labels to help you make healthy food choices is discussed.



## **Hearing Health**

We review the anatomy of the ear, common causes of hearing loss, various remedies, and how to choose hearing aids.

## **Heart Operations**

If you are interested in how the heart operates or know someone who may be considering a heart operation, this will provide helpful information.



## **Housing and the Care Continuum**

We explain the continuum of care and how housing in BC fits into the continuum.

## **Hypertension**

We review the effects of high blood pressure on the body.

## **Identifying Addiction**

We examine the risk factors, and suggest how to approach a friend or family member when you suspect addiction.

## **Keeping Seniors Safe**

Abuse and neglect of seniors takes many forms. Participants learn how to identify suspicious signs and symptoms.

## **Knowing Your Bladder**

How the bladder functions and the causes of bladder incontinence, infection and irritation are explained.

## **Life Without Driving**

We explore warning signs of the need to consider other ways of getting around, encourage early planning, and outline alternatives to driving.

## **Medication Awareness**

Information about how seniors can interact with doctors and pharmacists to ensure safe and effective use of medications is presented.

## **Memory and Aging**

This session explains how memory functions and how it changes as we age

## **Mental Health**

An overview of mental disorders and how individuals can contribute to their own mental health are outlined.

## **Navigating the Emergency Department**

We review some of the reasons for going to the Emergency Department and some reasons not to go.



## **Navigating the Health Care System**

We review many of the medical services and what you can expect from them.

## **Osteoarthritis**

We describe symptoms, explain self-management strategies, and review various therapies.

## **Osteoporosis**

We discuss the causes, risk factors, and recent treatment options of this “bone disease”.

## **Palliative Care**

The focus of this workshop is on the comfort and dignity of patients as they cope with serious illness. The scope of palliative care is explained.

## **Parkinson’s Disease**

This workshop provides a clear explanation of the changes in the brain that cause this disease.

## **Pedestrian Safety**

Although walking has many benefits, for older adults there is also a need to understand its potential hazards and take necessary precautions.



## **Pension and Tax Options**

This workshop describes the potential pension benefits that may occur if a couple enters involuntary separation. The workshop also deals with the rules which govern tax allowances for caregivers and disabled persons.

## **Personal Planning Overview**

The wisdom of having a personal plan if you are no longer able to speak for yourself is emphasized.

## **Powers of Attorney**

In this workshop, we discuss all four types of Power of Attorney, and consider when you need a PoA.

## **Representation Agreements**

There are two types of Representation Agreements in BC, and we discuss their importance and their differences. In addition, we consider criteria for choosing your Representative as we outline the duties and responsibilities of that role.

## **Safety in the Home**

We provide detailed checklists of potential dangers outside the home and in every room indoors.

## **Skin Conditions**

Four major skin problems are discussed: cancer, shingles, nails fungus and pressure sores.

## **Sleep**

Many older adults find it difficult to get enough sleep and this workshop explores some reasons and remedies.

## **Social Connectedness**

This workshop helps participants to determine the level of social connectedness they need and how to achieve it.

## **Stroke & TIA**

We describe the types of strokes, emphasizing mini-strokes, early warning signs and information about prevention.



## **Technology and Aging**

We describe how technology can help manage the demands of daily living, connect with family and friends, and access assistance when needed.

## **Vision Health**

We describe the structure of the eye and explain major diseases that may affect the eyes of older adults.

## **Wills**

We review the legal rules for preparing wills in B.C., the duties of an executor, legal terminology, and pitfalls to avoid.

## **Resources**

We have an extensive and growing list of resources for each of our workshops. If you want to learn more about one of these topics, our list of resources is a good start. Just scroll through this list of topics and browse through some of the most up-to-date resources available. The resources may be all you need, but if you are interested in more information and conversation about any of these topics, you can book a workshop for a group using the [How to Request a Workshop Form](#).

## TESTIMONIALS

"I thought I knew a lot, but I learned some stuff today" From a woman in her 80's who had moved here from Washington State after her husband died.

### Workshop on Wills

"I found the workshop both scary and informative." Workshop on Skin Conditions

"It was an excellent workshop; learned a lot and I like listening to you." From a participant who had sat throughout the workshop without any indication that he was getting anything out of it. Workshop on Mental Health

"I was very surprised at the number of new ideas I learned as a result of the presentation" Workshop on Sleep.

Many stories were shared of how pharmacists had changed medication after alerting the patient and doctor of possible negative drug interactions.

### Workshop on Medication Awareness

"There was a lot more information than I was expecting, and it was hard to take it all in." (From a woman who was nearing 80, who was thinking of giving up her home and moving to Assisted Living) Workshop on Housing and the Care Continuum.



One attendee said, "I had three things I would do: take the brown bag medication review with my pharmacist, drink more water, and try to learn a new language as my wife is Philippina and I always said I would learn Tagalog, and it would be good for my brain". Workshop on Memory and Aging

A professional Musician who suffered a stroke said, "I thought it was great." He asked some other questions but was told to talk to his doctor. He said, he would talk to his doctor, and he also said he felt more positive. Workshop on Memory and Aging

"Our community needs more support for seniors. Fortunately, many seniors are leading healthy lives, empowered with knowledge and skills to continue to contribute to their communities. However, there is an increasing number of seniors faced with social isolation, especially those with little to no family nearby, or those with language barriers. COSCO's workshops are a great resource to seniors and provide them with many opportunities to connect with other seniors and programs" Michael Lee, MLA, Vancouver-Langara.



## Why YOU would enjoy becoming a Seniors' Health and Wellness Institute facilitator.

- It's fun!
- It makes you feel good to work collaboratively with others.
- Take on a challenge; learn new skills.
- Training is provided.
- All materials and background information are provided.
- You learn about so many different things.
- It's a great way to connect with other seniors.
- Volunteering with us helps you gain confidence by giving you the chance to try something new and build a sense of achievement.
- It allows you to make a difference in peoples lives.
- Be part of a community that cares about you.
- Did I mention that it is fun?



Volunteering as a facilitator is very rewarding. We are always looking for individuals interested in volunteering their time to share information about a wide range of topics. Come join us! Browse our [website](#) to learn more. then contact our president, Barb Mikulec to get started. Email: <mailto:president@seniorshelpingseniors.ca>

We look forward to meeting you at our next gathering for facilitators!

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (INSERT DATE HERE AS [2022 02-19])

### FREE WORKSHOPS ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR SENIORS BY SENIORS

The Seniors' Health & Wellness Institute (COSCO) provides free workshops to any seniors' groups in (YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY NAME HERE EXAMPLE VERNON). The Institute currently has over 40 workshops available for presentation by trained facilitators. By consulting with experts in their fields, volunteers with the assistance of field-specific experts as needed, developed these workshops to ensure all information is up-to-date and accurate. All our sessions provide practical information. They do not provide specific legal, medical or financial advice. They can present workshops on-line via ZOOM or in person, depending on the needs of the seniors in the community.

Where possible, workshops are offered with an interpreter or in other languages, to support seniors who are more comfortable in a language other than English. In that regard, many of the workshop handouts are currently also available in simplified script for Mandarin speakers, Japanese, Spanish and Punjabi.

All workshops are interactive and take about an hour to present. Each participant leaves with a handout of key points and is encouraged to use this new information to help consider changes in their behaviours to increase their chances of staying safe and well.

The information received is important to the participants: "At a workshop in an Indigenous Seniors Center, one woman was in tears because after a stroke she could no longer read or write, and she found out that her Will had to be typed or handwritten; it could not be oral. At the workshop, the facilitator asked a Chief (retired) if there was anyone in the community who could help her, and the Chief spoke to her and gave her the name of a person and she was relieved" Workshop on Wills.

At a workshop on Life After Driving, one woman said she had decided to not drive because of dementia, and she talked about the impact that had on her life.

"In a workshop on Navigating the Health Care System, a person said because of the workshop, they would change their approach to their specialists.

Seniors need this information. If you would like further information, go to the Institute's Website at <https://seniorshelpingseniors.ca/> or email the president at [president@seniorshelpingseniors.ca](mailto:president@seniorshelpingseniors.ca)

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About the Institute:

The Seniors' Health and Wellness Institute Society, COSCO, is a Canadian registered charity and a B.C. non-profit society. Beginning in 2007 with a single workshop, the Institute has grown to where we offer 46 free health and wellness workshops for seniors across British Columbia. As of January 2022, we have presented over 3,000 workshops, which over 55,000 people have attended. Contact our President for more information: [president@seniorshelpingseniors.ca](mailto:president@seniorshelpingseniors.ca)