



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

Our Story

Beginning in 2007 with a single workshop, the Institute has grown to where we are currently able to offer 47 free health and wellness workshops for seniors across BC and Canada. As of October 2023, we have presented over 3,300 workshops, which over 63,000 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 presenters 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 presenters. We currently have more than 40 presenters 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 and information 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 presenters, the Institute offers in-person and online workshops across the province. Presenters continue to hone their presentation skills at our regularly scheduled Gather Share Learn sessions.

Our Goal:

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 Purpose:

Our purpose is to promote the health and wellness of seniors by:

- a) establishing and operating an institute dedicated to supporting the well-being of seniors.
- b) providing persons who are over the age of 55 and in need of such services with information that can help them address a wide range of challenges related to aging.
- c) informing seniors of relevant resources and appropriate agencies that can assist them with challenges associated with aging.
- d) ensuring that information is accessible to seniors in diverse settings, in the languages spoken by them, fostering a culture of "seniors helping seniors".

PARTNERSHIPS

Workshops are offered to seniors through our partnership with over 200 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 their requested virtual workshops. Seniors' Health and Wellness has started to offer workshops through Zoom to individuals who may not have access to our workshops through other agencies.

In late 2021, we offered a series of six sessions hosted by Seniors' Health and Wellness that focused on Personal Planning. Over 90 participants attended. As a result, several more themed groupings have now been prepared for this purpose. While the series are listed in the [Workshop Brochure Online](#), here is a sneak peek of all the workshops, singly or in a 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 reflection, discussion and the time needed to clarify your own understandings to better deal with both personal and legal aspects of personal planning. 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 discuss some of the diseases seniors may get as they age, and we provide ideas on the management of both the illness and the related discomfort and/or 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 bodies change. 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](#).

Advocacy and Care: We explore the needs of the caregiver and the care recipient and how to navigate the health care and financial issues that both face. 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: some diseases give little to no warning. Others can result from life stressors and their potentially long-term consequences. 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](#).

Workshops in Cantonese: Several of our workshops are now available in Cantonese. Currently workshops available include: [Mental Health](#), [Emergency Preparedness](#), [Frauds and Scams](#), [Age Well, Live Well with Safe Medication Use](#), [Falls Prevention](#), and [Wills](#).



STAND-ALONE WORKSHOPS

Detailed information about each workshop can be found at our website: 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-Friendly Communities

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

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.

Aging in Place

Most older Canadians would prefer to stay in their homes as they age, but only one in four feel confident they will be able to do so.

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 provide 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 defraud 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

We take a look at how the heart operates and provide information for those considering a heart operation.

Housing and the Care Continuum

We explain the continuum of care and what the requirements and procedures are for accessing appropriate housing.

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 is presented 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 planning ahead for your future as you age is emphasized. The personal and legal documents you may wish to put into place are outlined.

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 to stay healthy and how to achieve it.

Stroke & TIA

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

Technology and Aging

Technology can help manage the demands of daily living, connect with family and friends, and access assistance when you need it.

Vision Health

The structure of the eye is described and major diseases that may affect the eyes of seniors are noted.

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

General Comment: "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 Medication Awareness: Many stories were shared of how pharmacists had changed medication after alerting the patient and doctor of possible negative drug interactions.

Workshop on Housing and the Care Continuum: "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 Memory and Aging:

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 Stroke and TIA: 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 Social Connectedness: "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 presenter.

- 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 people's lives.
- Be part of a community that cares about you.
- Did I mention that it is fun?



Volunteering as a presenter 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: president@seniorshelpingseniors.ca

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

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (INSERT DATE HERE AS [2023-11-27])

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 presenters. Volunteers, with the assistance of field-specific experts as needed, developed these workshops to ensure all information is user-friendly, up-to-date and accurate. All our sessions provide practical information. They do not provide specific legal, medical or financial advice. Workshops can be presented 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. 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 positive changes in their lives to increase their chances of staying safe, healthy and well.

The information received is important to the participants: Some examples: "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 presenter 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 and want this information. If you would like to learn more, go to the Institute's website at <https://seniorshelpingseniors.ca/> or email the president at 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 47 free health and wellness workshops for seniors across British Columbia. As of October 2023, we have presented over 3,300 workshops, which over 63,000 people have attended. Contact our president for more information: president@seniorshelpingseniors.ca