



Mental Health First Aid – Supporting Older Adults Handout

Scenarios: Module 2

Scenario 1: Signs of a Substance Use Problem

When you meet Maté, you learn:

- Maté is a recent widower and a member of the Hungarian community.
- He uses a wheelchair.
- He has been a social drinker throughout his life, but since his wife died, he drinks a lot more.
- His English is not as strong as his wife's was, which makes things difficult for him.
- He says he doesn't care about his drinking because he'll be dead soon anyway.

Scenario 2: Signs of Depression

When you meet Ghedi, you learn:

- He arrived in Canada with his son's family as a refugee a year ago
- He is struggling to make social contacts
- He is sleeping very poorly
- He appears to be sad
- He says that he is lucky to be safe in Canada and that he has no right to be unhappy.

Scenario 3: Signs of Anxiety

- Rita is a good friend of yours.
- She suffered a bad fall walking home alone from the grocery store a few weeks ago.
- She can't quite remember how it happened, but she blames herself.
- She says to you that she:
 - hasn't been able to walk over to the store to get groceries since the accident
 - doesn't even feel comfortable going for a walk alone anymore
 - is irritable
 - has been arguing with her partner
 - is not sleeping well
 - drinks a little to help her fall asleep.





Module 2 Activity: Ask, don't assume or tell

In teams of 3, identify:

Person A: Person seeking help

Person B: Helper

Person C: Observer

Person A: You've asked for Person B's help (choose one):

- What kind of new car to buy
- Where to go on vacation
- What to do for fun and/or enjoyment

Person B: Use questions to engage the person in a discussion.

Person C: Observe and take note of what Person B does that helps.



Module 3 Activity: Prepare for possible challenges

In your group:

- Identify a spokesperson
- Discuss and make note of what the first aider could do if faced with the following challenges:
 1. The older adult is reluctant to talk with me
 2. The older adult is reluctant to reach out to supports
 3. The older adult is agitated and becomes, at times, verbally and physically reactive.





Scenarios: Module 3

Scenario 4: Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviours

- Diane is a friend.
- She cries more often than usual.
- She gets out of bed late in the day.
- She has lost a lot of weight.
- She has lost interest in her appearance.
- She tells you she cannot cope any more.
- When you ask about suicide she responds, “Yes, I no longer want to live. There is no point.”
- She says that she has been collecting prescription drugs and in the next couple of days she will take them.

Scenario 5: Onset of Dementia

- Marlene, 74, lives with her widowed sister, Felicia, and niece, Sandra.
- All three are active in their local Caribbean community.
- A year ago, Felicia noticed that Marlene began forgetting household chores.
- She started saying unusual things, asking if her niece (50 yrs) was ready for school, and if Felicia’s husband would be home for supper, later denying she had asked the questions.
- Marlene occasionally forgets where she is or who she is.
- Felicia wants to keep Marlene’s “changes” a secret from their community.
- Sandra wants Marlene to see her doctor; Felicia refuses because the doctor is part of their community.
- Marlene is becoming verbally reactive and sometimes strikes out in frustration.

Scenario 6: Reaction to Trauma

- Martha is a friend that uses the “they” pronoun.
- Three weeks ago, Martha witnessed their girlfriend being assaulted with a knife.
- Martha reports that they are okay but that they’ve been irritable lately and getting into arguments with people around them.
- They’re embarrassed because they are crying unexpectedly.
- They begin to cry while speaking with you.

Scenario 7: Severe Effects of Alcohol Use

When you drop by to visit your neighbour, Thomas, you notice he has

- Slurred speech
- Trouble moving
- Irregular, shallow, or slow breathing
- Irregular, weak, or slow pulse rate
- Cold, clammy skin.





ALIFES Worksheet: Scenario 1

<p>Assess safety: risk of suicide, serious physical deterioration, and/or harm to others</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Information and reassurance</p>	
<p>Facilitate the older adult getting appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage support for the older adult and caregiver</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





ALIFES Worksheet: Scenario 2

<p>Assess safety: risk of suicide, serious physical deterioration, and/or harm to others</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Information and reassurance</p>	
<p>Facilitate the older adult getting appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage support for the older adult and caregiver</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





ALIFES Worksheet: Scenario 3

<p>Assess safety: risk of suicide, serious physical deterioration, and/or harm to others</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Information and reassurance</p>	
<p>Facilitate the older adult getting appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage support for the older adult and caregiver</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





ALIFES Worksheet: Scenario 4

<p>Assess safety: risk of suicide, serious physical deterioration, and/or harm to others</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Information and reassurance</p>	
<p>Facilitate the older adult getting appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage support for the older adult and caregiver</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





ALIFES Worksheet: Scenario 5

<p>Assess safety: risk of suicide, serious physical deterioration, and/or harm to others</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Information and reassurance</p>	
<p>Facilitate the older adult getting appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage support for the older adult and caregiver</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





ALIFES Worksheet: Scenario 6

<p>Assess safety: risk of suicide, serious physical deterioration, and/or harm to others</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Information and reassurance</p>	
<p>Facilitate the older adult getting appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage support for the older adult and caregiver</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





ALIFES Worksheet: Scenario 7

<p>Assess safety: risk of suicide, serious physical deterioration, and/or harm to others</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Information and reassurance</p>	
<p>Facilitate the older adult getting appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage support for the older adult and caregiver</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





Module 3 Activity: Two Commitments to Practise

	Commitment 1	Commitment 2
What will I commit to doing?		
Why is this important to me?		
When will I start?		
Who/What resources could help me?		

“Knowledge is of no value
unless you put it into practice.”

Anton Chekhov

