



Title of the study: Mentally Healthy Living After Social Distancing – A Study of Older Canadians
Ethics Approval: Pro00118512_REN2; Pro0118512_AME2

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Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in this RTOERO Foundation funded Canada-wide research study because you downloaded '[Cooking up calm](#)'. Our study partner, Qualtrics, is helping us to collect survey data about mentally healthy living during this time of social distancing and has generated an anonymous survey link for you to use, should you decide to take part in this study. The RTOERO Foundation is sharing this link to help us learn about how you use 'Cooking up calm', and how it has helped you and might help others. You are key to helping 'Cooking up calm' be a long-living document, and how it has helped you and might help other people.

Purpose of the Study: In the Summer of 2022, when public health restrictions were lifting, Dr. Low and her Living Well Research team launched the "Mentally Healthy Living After Social Distancing: A Study of Older Canadians" project (Pro00118512). This e-survey project was borne out of the idea that community groups can work together to tackle large-scale problems from pandemics, including mental harms. Our nationally representative studied sample of 1,327 older Canadian respondents helped us to identify strategies best reducing and even enhancing their anxiety levels. Our priority was therefore to develop and share a related learning resource for public consumption. This 33-page booklet is called 'Cooking up calm'. Good mental health information can be translated into actionable behaviors *and* advice.

In and outside of the kitchen, readers can integrate anxiety-reducing strategies and advice for living a less isolated life from 'Cooking up calm' into their daily lives. With four months since its release, now is an ideal time for reflection and practical application. Valuable feedback will help this booklet remain a palatable and effective tool for promoting mentally healthy living.

Eking out a mentally healthy living during the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to be a long process. Mental health is a resource for everyday living and is everyone's concern. 'Cooking up calm' is an important resource for public consumption, for older persons and for community stakeholders, including healthy aging advocacy bodies and practitioners and researchers working with older persons. Sharing new knowledge is about connecting people with people and people with evidence.

Participation: If you wish to participate in this study, please complete the attached e-survey. The e-survey should take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. Once you have completed the survey, click the "submit" button. The survey will be open for 2 weeks. We would appreciate receiving it by February 28th.

Benefits: ‘Cooking up calm’ features anxiety-lessening strategies, sage advice, and simple healthy comfort food recipes to make mental health matters palatable matters. We can learn about the benefits of ‘Cooking up calm’ through your feedback and perhaps even how this booklet can be further tailored for other older Canadians to best eke out and to maintain a mentally healthy living. Good mental health information is understandable information that helps others to live less anxiety-laden and less isolated lives. An anonymous survey link permits us to work together to build a larger community of recovery.

Risks: This is a project about mental health which is still a taboo subject. You may feel emotional upset when you are thinking about the pandemic as ‘Cooking up calm’ mentions COVID-19. If you do, please reach out to a family member or friend or to your family doctor. The people in our lives who matter most can help us feel less alone and give us strength. We also have a list of [Canada-wide toll-free mental health support lines](#), compiled by the Canada Coalition for Seniors’ Mental Health. You can also call Crisis Service Canada toll-free at 1-833-456-4566.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: The information that you will share will remain strictly confidential and will be used solely for the purposes of this research. The Living Well Research Team alone will have access to analyze surveys and to generate findings and summaries of findings for lay and scientific presentations and publications. Your answers to open-ended questions may be used verbatim, but neither you (nor your organization) will be identified.

In order to minimize the risk of security breaches and to help ensure your confidentiality we recommend that you use standard safety measures such as signing out of your account, closing your browser and locking your screen or device when you are no longer using them / when you have completed the study. Because Qualtrics, our survey data collector, is located in the continental USA, the data is also subject to USA privacy legislation. Results will be published in pooled (aggregate) format. We will be asking you about your age, sex at birth, gender, education, marital status, your home province, and general health. This will help us to see whether views about ‘Cooking up calm’ differ among, for example, men and women, and based on how healthy you feel. Anonymity is guaranteed. Your name, email or IP addresses will not be available to the research team.

Data Storage: Electronic copies of the survey dataset will be encrypted and stored on a password protected computer in the department of Nursing at the University of Alberta for 5 years.

Voluntary Participation: You are under no obligation to participate and if you choose to participate, you may refuse to answer questions that you do not want to answer. Qualtrics records all of your survey responses. Should you choose to withdraw partway through the electronic survey, simply close the survey link. Given the anonymous nature of the survey, once you have submitted your responses it will no longer be possible to withdraw them from the study. Incomplete surveys will not be used for analysis.

Information about the Study Results: At the end of this study, our findings will be shared on social media and mentally healthy aging websites.

Contact Information: If you have any questions or require more information about the study itself, you may contact the Principal Investigator by email (gail.low@ualberta.ca).

The plan for this study has been reviewed by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant or how the research is being conducted you may contact the Research Ethics Office at reoffice@ualberta.ca

Please keep or print a copy of this form for your records.

Completion and submission of the survey indicates your consent to participate.