Mental Health of Older Persons: A Conceptual and Empirical Overview
Includes:

1. Main policy challenge
2. Determinants of mental health at later life
3. Prevalence of mental health conditions among older persons
4. Policy strategies & examples
5. Recommendations
6. Checklist

Produced with Standing Working Group on Ageing

Available: https://unece.org/policy-briefs
The policy challenge

- Significant share of older persons are affected by mental disorders
- Older persons at high risk of suicide
- Loneliness impacts nearly 30 per cent of older persons in some countries
- Concerning increase in prevalence in recent years, esp. after the pandemic

Depression affects a large share of older persons
Mental health of older persons

- Cornerstone of individual and societal well-being
  - Basic human right
  - Continuum

Important recognizing the multitude of individual experiences
Determinants of mental health across the life course

- Can increase or decrease vulnerability

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Sources: Adapted from World Health Organization (2014)
Mental Health of Older Persons

- Older persons face triple burden
- Specific needs often not recognized in policies

- Ageism
- Challenging life events / transitions
- Stigma
Depression affects more than 1 in 4 older persons
Women, less educated persons and those aged 80 years or above bear the greatest burden of depression.
Policy Strategies & Recommendations

- Address specific needs of older persons in mental health policies
- Combat ageism, eliminating stigma and improving mental health literacy
- Invest in prevention and early detection
- Improve access to treatment
- Provide support at work and during challenging life events
- Enhance research and data collection

▶ Involving diverse stakeholders and older persons with mental health conditions in decision-making