

Caring for Seniors During an Emergency

While many Manitoba seniors are active and self-sufficient, there are some who will need extra support during a flood, particularly if their homes are directly affected and if they live alone. Everyone, including seniors, will react differently to the stress of dealing with a flood. It's natural for people to:

- feel overwhelmed and unable to focus on daily tasks
- get preoccupied with a particular loss, such as a pet
- feel overwhelmed, helpless or hopeless
- get preoccupied with the past and previous losses or grief

Watch for signs of anxiety or stress in seniors, including:

- withdrawal and isolation (staying indoors, not bringing in mail or getting groceries)
- denial of the situation, refusing help or personal contact
- unkempt appearance, taking unhealthy risks, not taking medication
- change in eating habits, appetite, sleep patterns
- talk of being a burden, depression, hopelessness

Take care of older relatives, friends or neighbours during an emergency:

- Keep a watchful eye on them and check in with them regularly.
- Take time to listen and let them talk out their anxiety and concerns.
- Remind them they're important in your life by spending time with them (walks, having meals together).
- Accept their offers to help where they can.
- Include them in flood plans, emergency responses and clean-up work. Offer to help with heavy lifting and clean up, without taking over and doing it yourself.
- Help them with tasks that look like they might be difficult (carrying groceries, getting to appointments, cleaning, cooking).
- Bring extreme needs to the attention of health workers or contacts listed below for follow-up (extreme anxiety or trouble sleeping for an extended period of time).
- Help them connect with community or faith groups that work with and help seniors, if it seems appropriate.
- Support and encourage them to stay connected to the community (social gatherings and outings, entertainment, funerals, hospital visits).

Use outside support and resources when you need them

If you, your family, friends or neighbours are having a hard time dealing with stress, you can get help:

- Health Links – Info Santé can help you find resources through your local regional health authority or community mental health services office. Call 204-788-8200 in Winnipeg; toll free 1-888-315-9257 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Manitobans can call Manitoba Farm and Rural Support Services at 1-866-367-3276 toll free; 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. weekdays. Or, go to <https://supportline.ca/>.
- Klinik Community Health Centre 24-hour Crisis Line can provide counselling and referrals for all Manitobans. Call 204-786-8686 in Winnipeg; toll free 1-888-322-3019; 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide the Manitoba Suicide Line is available to all Manitobans. Call 1-877-435-7170 toll free; 24 hours a day, seven days a week; or go to www.reasonstolive.ca.
- Seniors Information Line provides support for seniors across the province. Call 204-945-6565 in Winnipeg; 1-800-665-6565 toll free; 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.
- Age & Opportunity: Support Services for Older Adults can provide counselling services and free home safety audits for older adults. Call 204-956-6440 in Winnipeg; 1-888-333-3121 toll free; 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.