



## HIV & Complex Medical Concerns

In this video, inter-professional health care providers and people living with HIV explore the issues of aging with this serious, long term illness and the potential complexities of care that can arise. Consideration is also given to common age-associated illnesses, including cancer and cognitive change, and the ways these add to the complexities of aging with HIV.

### Accelerated aging

- For a variety of reasons, people living and aging with HIV are at an increased risk for health complications at all ages, and some can experience common age-associated illnesses at a younger age than the majority of the population; this is sometimes referred to as “accelerated aging.”
- Some of these effects may be due to normal human aging, lifestyle factors, the HIV virus and the long term use of HIV medications.
- The **Cognitive Changes** video provides further information on some of the complexities of aging with HIV.

### Mental health

- As well as complexities in the physical health of people living with HIV, there are also emotional and psychological factors that can make care more complicated. This can be true of any serious, chronic illness.
- Living with HIV can have a significant impact on mental health, in part due to experiences of stigma and isolation. At the same time, mental health concerns can affect things such as medication adherence and access to treatment. The **Mental Health** video provides more information.

### Substance use

- Some people living with HIV may also use substances, which can impact physical and mental health, as well as access to care, medication regimens and adherence. Care providers also need to work to avoid imposing our own values and goals, and strive to meet clients where they are at as opposed to where we may feel they need to be.
- The **Substance Use, Addictions & HIV Care** video provides further information including the role of harm reduction techniques in caring for someone who uses substances.

### Integrated care

- Drawing from the diverse skills and resources of an interdisciplinary team – including doctors, nurses, PSWs, social workers, housekeeping, support staff and external consultants – is integral to seeing the larger context behind the symptoms each client presents and being able to provide the best care, as well as creating a safe and supportive working environment.

### Sources and links

The Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation (CWGHR) offers links to resources on aging with HIV: [www.hivandrehab.ca/EN/HIV%20and%20Aging/HIVandAging.php](http://www.hivandrehab.ca/EN/HIV%20and%20Aging/HIVandAging.php)

The Toronto People With AIDS Foundation offers a list of publications in English, French and Spanish, including resources on aging with HIV: [www.pwatoronto.org/english/publications.php](http://www.pwatoronto.org/english/publications.php)

CATIE offers facts and resources on HIV and mental health in Canada: [www.catie.ca/en/hiv-canada/7/7-4](http://www.catie.ca/en/hiv-canada/7/7-4)

[www.HIV411.ca](http://www.HIV411.ca) is a resource to help locate counseling and support services for people living with HIV across Canada