



TOOL

Personas: Older Adults



Many Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) are focusing on integrating care for older adults in Year 1. The **Personas Tool** can help OHTs consider the nuances and complexities of this population when planning and designing services.

What are the most pressing health and social needs of each persona? How might this vary in our local context?
What are the barriers and challenges each persona experiences as a result of our current health care system and local resources?

more integrated, or newly designed program/service?



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IN A NUTSHELL



Older adults have skills, strengths, interests, passions and energy that can fuel the network effect of [Neighbours](#). They also have goals, needs and preferences that inform their choices and shape their experiences.

As you design services, it's important to think about who you are designing for. Personas are archetypical users whose characteristics and goals represent the needs of larger groups.

What does this tool help you do?

These personas can help you understand the expectations, needs and motivations of the people you are designing for. They can be useful for gaining a perspective that is similar to the end user. Personas can help you identify a broader range of needs of end users. These personas are based on our extensive field work with [Neighbours](#).



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ABOUT THIS TOOL

What was the tool developed for?

Partnering with multiple sites across Toronto, Health Commons has developed the [Neighbours](#) initiative, which aims to reduce isolation and improve quality of life. Neighbours is a catalyst for creating connected communities where people take care of one another and neighbourhood assets are activated to meet the health and social needs of residents.

These personas were developed to represent older adults we have met delivering Neighbours. We collected data through ethnographic research, survey responses, conversations, and observations from 2018 to 2019 across 5 housing sites in Toronto (mostly social housing).

How did we use it?

We use these personas to accurately represent the lived experience of older adults involved in [Neighbours](#)



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HOW YOU CAN USE THIS TOOL



Test your ideas for older adults against these personas. How might Zophia respond to your idea?



Ask the older adults in your network if these personas make sense to them. If not, make your own.



Engage with others who are also interested in supporting older adults using these personas as a conversation starter.



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Michael

The Helper

Interests

Meeting Nigerian-born
friends at church
Making people laugh
Exploring the local
neighbourhood

Is sometimes comfortable
asking for help
Manages many
medications
Values feeling
acknowledged

Connections

Meilin

The Marathoner



John The Soloist

Interests

Garage sales
Watching sports on TV
Using the internet at the library

Describes health as pretty good
Helped out at home by Personal Support Workers
Values independence and choice

Connections

Reaching out means

Zophia

The Survivor

Interests

Definitions

Social Isolation Low-----High

vary over time and circumstances.



Interests

The ways people enjoy spending time and the activities they enjoy doing or learning.

Sense of Safety Low-----High

feels in their current context, including, their home and neighbourhood. It is defined by a surroundings.

Connections

Interactions and activities that people have with others for both socialization and support.



Mobility Low-----High

-reported physical ability a person has. It is measured by the ability to carry out activities of daily living.

Quality of Life