

Points for discussion:

- When does old age begin?  
 Do we have an ageing population in Poland?  
 What are the characteristics of an ageing population? What are their needs?  
 What contributes to good mental health in later life?  
 What are the implications for the society and social workers?

**Task 1:** To what extent do these situations constitute a problem? Order them from the most severe to the least severe ones for the two groups.

A/ for young people	Situation	B/ for old people
	Adjustment to changing living circumstances, ex. moving to another town, commuting to work/ school/ healthcare center, losing a spouse, changing neighbours	
	Living alone	
	Living on low income, esp. lower than before	
	Suffering from physical disability	
	Suffering from mental disability	
	Making new friends and keeping relationships	
	Learning new things	
	Bereavement (losing a close relative)	

**Task 2:** Go through the text <https://www.scie.org.uk/assets/elearning/mentalhealth/mh01/resource/flash/index.htm> and mark the sentences True or False.

- 1/ Both the size of the population and the average age in the UK have risen over the past 30 years.
- 2/ More men than women aged over 65 years live as part of a couple. This reflects the fact that men tend to die younger.
- 3/ The number of people in the older population who are from black and minority ethnic groups is expected to go down in the future.
- 4/ Which of these statements is FALSE?
  - a. Most older people live with their spouse (55%)
  - b. There are 50.000 care homes in the UK. Most people who live in them are aged 85 or over.
  - c. 1 in 5 people in the UK are over 60.
- 5/ 'Old' and 'old age' are concepts which are easy to define.
- 6/ People relate to age in two ways: a) comparing themselves with others of the same age, and b) making a distinction between themselves and those who are 'really old'.
- 7/ Three indicators of good mental health at any age are: the capacity to make and sustain relationships, adjustment to living circumstances and
  - a. Being married
  - b. Being in employment
  - c. A sense of well-being
- 8/ Which of these is FALSE?
  - a. Just because you grow old doesn't mean you will necessarily suffer from any mental health problems.
  - b. Chronic physical illness, disability, loss and bereavement, and retirement may all compromise mental health.
  - c. The mental health problems that affect older people do not affect younger people.
  - d. Dementia is an illness which predominates amongst very old people.
- 9/ Although some mental disorders most typically present themselves in later life (e.g. dementia), mental health in old age is in part a consequence of successful ageing throughout one's life.
- 10/ Depression is not a significant problem for older people.

**Video:** Mental wellbeing of older people in care homes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Vg35ii5uVs>

**Discussion:** living in care homes versus with families – which is better? Consider the following aspects:

- opportunities during their day to participate in meaningful activity that promotes their health and mental wellbeing,
- maintaining and developing their personal identity,
- having the symptoms and signs of mental health conditions recognised, recorded or taken care of,
- fulfilling their specific needs arising from sensory impairment, e.g. vision or hearing problems,
- having the symptoms and signs of physical problems recognised, recorded and taken care of,
- having access to the range of healthcare services when they need them,
- maintaining relationships (friends, family),
- other (which ones?)

Vocabulary practice

Ageing	A/ a feeling of being comfortable, healthy, and happy
Dementia	B/ a small group of people or things within a much larger group
Bereavement	C/ the condition of your mind
Disability	D/ to help something to develop or increase; encourage
Mental health	E/ a physical or mental condition that makes it difficult for someone to use a part of their body properly, or to learn normally
Average	F/ becoming old
Impairment	G/ a serious illness affecting someone's brain and memory in which they gradually stop being able to think or behave in a normal way.
Minority	H/ when someone loses a close friend or relative because they have died
Wellbeing	I the amount, level, standard etc. that is typical of a group of people or things
Promote	J/ a condition in which a part of a person's mind or body is damaged or does not work well (ex. mental, visual, cognitive, hearing)