

Transcript of Ruth Cairns on Older Adults

Coronavirus is having a huge effect on the mental health of older people.

Over seventies are identified as a vulnerable group and as such the effects of social distancing are, I think most hard hitting in this group.

This is particularly the case for those people who live alone and would normally rely on family or informal support networks for their practical and emotional support and now find themselves very socially isolated I think there's also a very real fear in this group of people about what, what getting the virus would mean for them and the uncertainty that's associated with that, with some very real risks and a lot of media attention to deaths, particularly in older people from COVID So they're faced with huge stresses at the moment, and this is the case for everyone, but in those who have pre-existing mood or anxiety disorders, they are very vulnerable to a worsening of these symptoms at the moment.

The other important factor in older adults is that some of the adjustments that we've seen or made as a nation to adapt to social distancing, such as the move from real meetings, real contact with people, to using virtual platforms for social meet-ups and also for appointments is not as accessible for older people, or for some older people and in particular this is a problem for those who are not familiar with technology and those who are sensory impaired, particularly those who are hard of hearing or have a visual impairment.