



TAKE ACTION  
TO FIND MEANING

# Thank You

MOUVEMENT  
SANTÉ MENTALE  
QUÉBEC

Promouvoir, Soutenir, Outiller.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF A MEANINGFUL SOCIETY

To live in society, a municipality or in an environment in which we feel confident and feel safe can help us find happiness. What about you? Do you live in a community that is elderly-friendly, that makes sure everyone feels included, feels respected and has access to housing? Can you express yourself there? Your ideas, desires and opinions?

## STEPS THAT MAKE SENSE

- I record, write or shoot a movie about my life in order to reflect, to reap what I have sowed, to share my story.
- I choose a dream that is dear to me, I adapt it to my current situation, and I'm getting closer to it.
- I choose to put aside something that has bothered me for too long.

## TOGETHER

- Social and familial environment, the neighborhood, access to transport, and politics have an impact on our life and health. What impact does the environment have on my well-being? How can I contribute to it, share my ideas, express my anger, etc.?

## WHO SAID WE WERE TOO SMALL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

**Imagine a mosquito in a room.**  
**Talk about it to whoever is trying to sleep!**

Powerlessness means suffering. To feel in power reduces the pain! To act, means to choose, to say something or to stay silent, to do something or not, to wait for the right moment, to pray or meditate, to move or share a house, to open yourself or not to the unexpected, to get help whenever necessary. To act doesn't always mean to take concrete action. But to take care of yourself, to invest in the pleasures of life or to take the time to love also means to act.

## STEPS TO FIND MEANING

- How to get closer to a dream or an activity that I want to do for a long time? How to adapt it to my reality? For example, some people will adapt their old dream of visiting Greece by eating in a Greek restaurant, by visiting the Acropolis with Google Earth, or by watching a documentary.
- What drives me and gives me the feeling to live fully?

## TOGETHER

- I run through the website called *Voisins solidaires*, which promotes good relations between neighbors and talks of sharing and caring between neighbors. I don't wait, I'm making friends!

<http://voisinsolidaires.ca/>

## TO SEE WHAT'S GOOD... AND TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT

It's easy to see what's not working well, or not working at all, and to put the emphasis on bad news. The brain tends to naturally detect dangers. Gratefulness means seeing the positive sides, enjoying them and giving thanks. It's a way to say thank you for that smile we received, the sky's beauty, that last family visit, the access to transport, the meal I'm about to eat, all those things my body is able to do despite the abilities it has lost.

Gratitude sometimes require an effort, but it's an effort that is well worth. Gratitude increases the level of well-being, reduces stress, and allows us to have that "Wow!" feeling. To be amazed before a beautiful landscape, a flowering garden, a teenager's determination, a work of art, a meal between friends. To be amazed is to be part of Life.

Keep a Gratitude diary, in which you will write before going to bed. This practice allows for better restorative sleep<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> SERVAN SCHREIBER, Florence. « Le pouvoir de la gratitude », *Prendre confiance*, [en ligne]. [https://www.prendreconfiance.com/pouvoir-gratitude-florence-servan-schreiber-conference-tedxparis/] (28 novembre 2017).

## WAYS TO FEEL MORE GRATEFUL



- I keep a gratitude diary, and I write in it three positive elements or situations that happened to me during the day or the week.

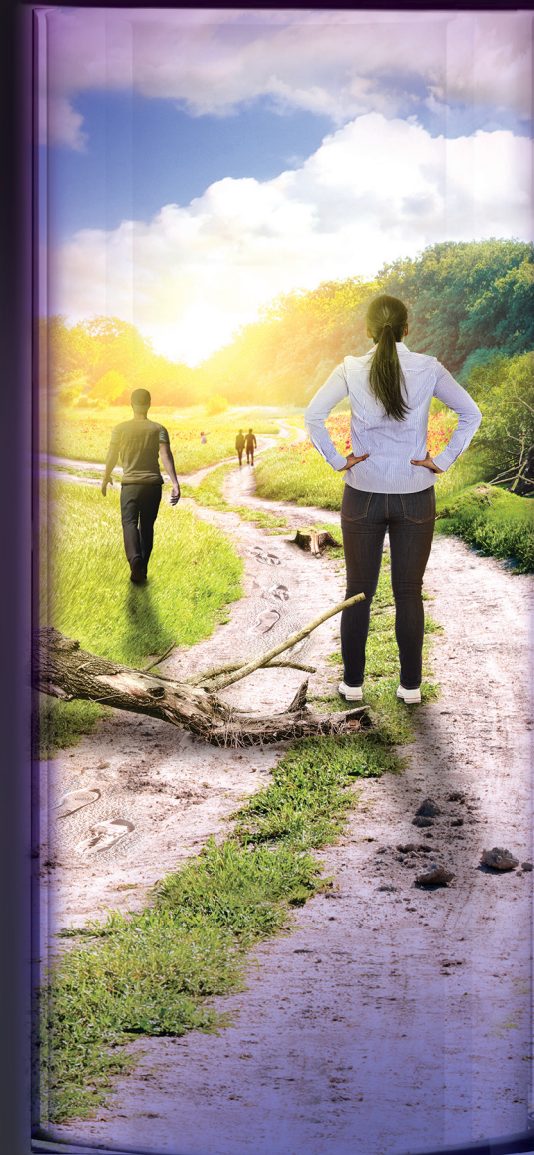
## TOGETHER



- I create a movement of gratitude by handing out "Thank you" cards.
- I create a "Recognition Gala" with my family, friends, a community organization, and neighbors.

# TAKE ACTION

TO FIND MEANING



TOOL FOR SENIORS

Here are **THREE ELEMENTS** that contribute to our well-being:

- Finding meaning;
- Acting on important matters;
- Recognizing and accepting the positive things around us.

**MENTAL HEALTH DEFINITION**

**Insert the word in the right place to make sense.**

*take action – dynamic balance – society  
enjoy – engage – physical – difficulties*

It represents a \_\_\_\_\_ between the various aspects of our life: social, \_\_\_\_\_, economical, spiritual, emotional and mental. Mental fitness helps us \_\_\_\_\_, live up to our potential, cope with day-to-day \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in our community. It is influenced by our living conditions and by the dominant values in our \_\_\_\_\_, as well as our own individual ones. Being mentally healthy allows us to \_\_\_\_\_ life.

Take our online survey at:  
[www.mouvementsmq.ca](http://www.mouvementsmq.ca)

**EVERYONE FINDS THEIR PATH**

**NEVER TOO OLD**

In his book, *Mots de ma vie*, well-known journalist and cultural program host Bernard Pivot wrote: “Growing old is annoying, because we don’t know when it began, and when it will end”<sup>1</sup>. Let’s add, however, that growing old is not a linear experience. It is specific to each person, and has the meaning that everyone wants to give to it

We’re never too old to have desires, to have projects, to be part of a group, a cause, a business, to feel useful, to learn. We can contribute by smiling, by listening, by refusing what is unacceptable, by committing ourselves to a cause, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Deux autres extraits de *Mots de ma vie* : <http://unmondelitteraire.com/vieillir-selon-bernard-pivot>  
<sup>2</sup> *Thierry Thieu Niang fait danser les seniors* : [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5B7h\\_lhec&t=43s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5B7h_lhec&t=43s)  
<sup>3</sup> TREMBLAY, Jean-Claude. « Bien vieillir », *Coffre à outils*, SNSM 2009, p. 26.  
<sup>4</sup> BERTRAND, Janette. *La vieillesse par une vraie vieille*, Montréal, Éd. Libre Expression, 2016, p. 93.  
<sup>5</sup> LAGANIÈRE, Carole. *Vieillir dans ma communauté*, CAMF et CDRV, [en ligne] [<http://carrefourmunicipal.qc.ca/municipalite-amie-des-aines/outils-mada/habitation/>] (30 novembre 2017)

“ To watch the movie of your life, with all its successes, big and small, and to accept them increases the feeling of satisfaction and self-confidence (...). Furthermore, the energy we get from this exercise makes us want to take action”<sup>3</sup>. ”

**LEARNING TO ACCEPT THE PAST**

Our lives are defined by a series of events. Looking back upon our lives can help us appreciate what we have received and learned, make peace with the wounds that we have received, as well as the ones we’ve inflicted, and remember our contributions. Leonard Cohen used to sing: “Cracks appear in everything. That is how light gets in.”

To write the story of our lives can help us understand how our personnel, social, political and religious history helped shaped who we are today. Would we be the same person if we had been born in 1980?

This exercise also helps us to choose what’s next, because it reminds us of our desires, our values, our dreams that we can adapt to our reality. Diane dreamed of becoming a dancer, and she made her dream a reality thanks to choreographer Thierry Thieu Niang, who invites people aged between 60 and 87 to create choreographies<sup>2</sup>. François went back to his first love now that he’s retired: the theater. As for Michel, he can finally fish as much as wants.

“ To have a goal in life is a good indicator of good health and well-being among the elderly. ”  
— Patricia Boyle

**ACCEPTING WHAT WE LOST**

The aging process is filled with grief. Oftentimes, it forces us to adapt and to accept what happens. We all know what these losses are about: our feet hurt when we get up in the morning, some muscles go limp, the passage of time well imprinted on our face, the passing of a friend, the house we leave behind, that driver’s licence that gets revoked...

“But growing old is a wonderful process, as it allows us to prepare for the moment we will leave this realm, by making us lose tiny bits of ourselves first”<sup>4</sup>.

Beyond our losses, there is always tomorrow and tomorrow means new opportunities. Find meaning in a new project (set up a cooperative housing project for the elderly in your village<sup>5</sup>), celebrate an arrival (the birth of a granddaughter), enjoy a discovery (the Algerian recipes of my neighbor), find spirituality, find ways to help your community.



MOUVEMENT SANTÉ MENTALE QUÉBEC  
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**A Québec-wide presence through the Mouvement and the regional members:**  
SMQ – Bas-Saint-Laurent | SMQ – Chaudière-Appalaches  
SMQ – Côte-Nord | SMQ – Haut-Richelieu | SMQ – Lac-Saint-Jean  
SMQ – Rive-Sud | SMQ – Pierre-De Saurel | ACSM – Filiale de Québec  
ACSM – Filiale Saguenay | CAP Santé Outaouais | Comité Prévention Suicide L-s-Q | PCSM | Le Traversier | RAIDDAT

The Mouvement Santé mentale Québec (MSMQ) is a grouping devoted to create, develop and strengthen mental health.

WE THANK:  
Le ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux | Financière Sun Life | Défi Santé

[etrebiendanssatete.ca](http://etrebiendanssatete.ca)

Thank You :  
GIVE THIS CARD TO SOMEONE WHO MAKES A REAL DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE  
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