

Newsletter

HOME CARE HQ



SPOTLIGHT ON LONELINESS



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- PET THERAPY BENEFITS
- FEATURED PRODUCTS
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- BRAIN HEALTH RESOURCE
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Featured Product: Uccello Kettle

If you're one of the 3.6 million people in Australia who are living with arthritis or other similar conditions that affect your joints, simple things like using the kettle can be painful, frustrating and sometimes even dangerous.

Thankfully, there's an innovative kettle on the market, that's designed to make preparing your next hot beverage a breeze.

Say hello to Uccello. An award winning kettle that pours hot water safely and steadily every time!

Carefully designed to help people with restricted mobility and limited strength, it's great for anyone who struggles with making a hot beverage due to the weight of their kettle with boiling water.

- Ergonomic handle for effortless tilt-to-pour action
- Auto shut-off with overheating protection
- An extra wide spout making it easy to fill
- Removable stainless steel anti-scale filter
- Non-slip weighted base
- Quiet boiling

There's also an optional, handy grip mat, which can be used as a guide to position your cup to create the perfect pour. Plus, its unique design has an outer ribbed area to assist people with visual impairment.

Here's a quick demonstration of how that works:

<https://youtu.be/seGthEUK-1A>

If you could benefit from a Uccello kettle, speak to your care manager about how it can be directly linked to your identified care needs to improve or maintain safety at home.

<https://www.uccellodesigns.com.au/>



The health effects of Loneliness

It can be hard to admit we're lonely, even to ourselves. Many people are reluctant to acknowledge they're lonely, for fear it makes them seem flawed in some way.

But it's important to know that loneliness is not your fault and it's not a personal failure. Rather, it's a wider issue with society, in part due to our diminished sense of community in a society that values self reliance and autonomy.

Persistent loneliness is painful. Not only does it involve immense emotional suffering, it also has a direct impact on our life expectancy.

Although the psychological effects of loneliness are more widely known, what's often not talked about is the significant impact our social relationships have on our physical health.

[Pioneering research](#) by Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience - Julianne Holt-Lunstad combining over 148 studies, showed that people with stronger social relationships had a 50% increased likelihood of survival over a given period of time, than those who have fewer social connections.

In a nutshell, having more and better relationships predicted living longer.

What about lacking relationships, does that put us at risk?

You may have seen the news headlines that lacking social connections, carries a similar risk to smoking up to 15 cigarettes per day.

This statistic comes directly from Julianne's research, which also suggests that social isolation is comparable (and in many cases exceeds) other well known risk factors such as:

Excessive drinking - Physical inactivity - Air pollution - Obesity and Poor nutrition.



The health effects of Loneliness

Importantly, research has linked social isolation and loneliness with a greater risk of: Heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, depression and dementia.

But here's the good news... There are things you can do!

The good news is, developmental psychologist and author of [The Village Effect](#) - Susan Pinker, elaborates on two important factors from the latest research that increase longevity:

These were close relationships (e.g. close friends you can rely on to support you), and social integration. Meaning how much you interact with people throughout your day.

Social integration includes both strong and weak bonds, such as the people you see on your daily walk, the quick chat you have at your local cafe, or the people who stop to pat your dog. It turns out the face-to-face interactions you have on a daily basis are also one of the strongest predictors of how long you'll live.

Face to face contact releases a whole cascade of neurotransmitters, one of which is the stress reducing hormone - oxytocin. Even making eye contact with someone can trigger the release of oxytocin.

Who would have thought a friendly hello could help lower your cortisol levels!

And it just so happens that your care managers are experts when it comes to keeping you connected to your community. Your wellbeing is our priority, so please get in touch to discuss your options for a wide range of meaningful activities we can organise for you.

You might even make some new friends along the way!

Watch Julianne's insightful video on the effects of social isolation here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMbRWNiauNE>



The benefits of Pet Therapy

If you've ever had the delightful experience of owning a pet, you know only too well the wonderful comfort and emotional support they provide. Offering an endless supply of love and snuggles, their companionship does wonders for our wellbeing.

Plus, numerous studies show they also make us feel good in ways that are backed by science.

Did you know, interaction with a dog can [significantly decrease](#) the inflammation producing stress hormone known as cortisol? And just a few minutes with a pet can [lower your blood pressure](#).

Not only do they fill our hearts with love, they also make it stronger!

So if health problems or mobility issues have prevented you from caring for a pet, that doesn't mean you need to miss out on their calming, oxytocin-inducing benefits.

Although pet therapy has been popular in hospitals and aged care facilities for some time, it's only recently that these services are now offering home visits.

So if you're looking forward to the stress busting, immune system boosting benefits of time with a pet, speak to your care manager about booking a visit.

Although we don't endorse any particular organisation, we've listed a few offering home visiting services below:

[Velmas Pet Therapy](#): NSW

[Pawever Companions](#): VIC

[4 Paws on the Floor](#): Gold Coast

[Therapy Paws Tasmania](#): TAS



Dementia Australia launches Brain Track app

Have you ever 'second-guessed' yourself if you occasionally forget which day it is, or where you put something?

Although forgetting things occurs for all of us, there are differences between occasional forgetfulness and more serious memory issues. Memory loss that disrupts daily life is not considered a normal part of ageing. For example, misplacing the car keys **and** then forgetting what they're used for.

To help people better understand suspected changes in their cognition over time, Dementia Australia have launched a free mobile app called BrainTrack.

Developed with Deakin University and funded by the Australian Government, the app is a self-monitoring tool designed around a series of fun, travel themed games that have been adapted from validated cognitive testing.

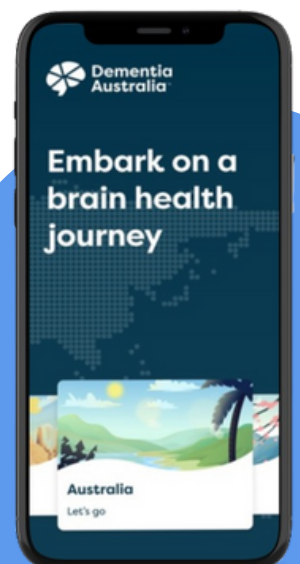
Users 'travel to a new country' every month to complete a series of games, and if they have any concerns about their results, the app can easily generate a pdf report to share with their GP.

"While not intended to replace a formal cognitive assessment, BrainTrack supports the early identification of cognitive changes over time that may warrant further testing," says Dementia Australia's CEO, Maree McCabe.

BrainTrack is available for download for free through the Apple App Store or Google Play. For more information, call the National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500, or visit:

<https://www.dementia.org.au/braintrack>

Please contact us if you have any concerns about your memory, thinking, or problem-solving abilities. We can explore some helpful strategies and options to use your home care funds in a meaningful and practical way.



Difficult conversations: it's your choice 😊

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission expect Home Care providers to know quite a lot about you and expect us to have conversations about some 'difficult' topics, as well as designing services and supports to address these issues with you.

But we all know that there is never really a 'good' time to raise some of these topics, and everyone feels differently about them.

These topics might include:

- Memory & thinking problems, dementia, Alzheimer's Disease, etc
- Incontinence
- Moods or feelings, depression, anxiety, etc
- Powers of Attorney, Making a Will
- Respite care options
- Elder abuse
- Loneliness and feelings of isolation
- Permanent residential care
- Advance care planning
- Palliative care
- Funeral plans

You might prefer to avoid discussing these difficult topics if you feel uncomfortable, if you're not sure how to respond, or for cultural reasons which might prevent you from talking with people outside your family.

We will respectfully introduce these topics with you, but you can decide how you would like to manage each of them personally.

Of course, you don't have to wait for us to raise these questions! You can help yourself and others around you by being proactive in raising these topics.

Giving yourself time to think things through for yourself will help you prepare for the conversation but more importantly, you will be able to remain in control of what you want us to know about your wishes and preferences.

Product spotlight: The Shapes United range

If you haven't heard of adaptive clothing before, it's a range of specialised clothing that's been specifically designed for people with disabilities, including older people, that looks like stylish every day clothing.

If you've ever tried to get dressed while seated, or do up zips or buttons one handed, adaptive clothing can help with these challenges by making dressing easier and prolonging independence.

Fiddly buttons are replaced with magnetic buttons and velcro closures. Flat seams and the absence of irritating tags allow for more comfort on your skin. And the reduction of chunky metal zippers and binding waistbands, can make activities of daily living less stressful and painful.

Adaptive clothing can make life easier for anyone managing health conditions such as, dementia, arthritis, oedema, or hospital recovery.

Additional benefits of The Shapes United range include:

- Open sides or backs - feature overlapping fabric panels in strategic areas that offer modesty, while still providing easy dressing as well as access to catheters and other medical devices
- Super-soft 100% cotton jersey to reduce aggravation for people with sensitive skin, eczema or sensory issues

If you could benefit from adaptive clothing, speak to your care manager about how it can be directly linked to your identified care needs to improve your ability to independently maintain activities of daily living.

Ph: 1300 893 826

<https://www.theshapesunited.com/pages/aged-care-health-care-packages>



Home Safety Assessments

What is it? The Aged Care Quality Standards require all providers to understand the environment you live in, and to help identify any potential risks or hazards to your safety and the safety of people working in your home.

What happens? During our first assessment with you, we'll conduct a Home Safety Review which might include us checking out some or all of these items:

- Your home location and general surroundings & neighbourhood;
- Bushfire or flood risks;
- Security – spare keys, key safe &/or medication locked-box location & codes, outdoor lighting, etc;
- Access & parking, pets, gates, pathways, steps, etc;
- Trip hazards in the house – power cords, carpet/rugs, furniture placement, slippery tiles, etc;
- Safety & functionality of your everyday appliances for you or support workers to use – including vacuum cleaner, microwave, fridge, kettle, washing machine/dryer, etc;
- Lighting throughout the house and functioning smoke detectors;
- Adequate space in the bathroom, and safety of fixtures such as shower, toilet and grab-rails;
- Height of chairs and bed to be suitable for safe sitting & standing;
- Specialised aids and equipment in place, or required for safety and health;
- Other risk factors such as smoking, excessive clutter, pests, secured weapons, etc.

If there are any concerns, we can work with you to find solutions that will work for you and your situation. Sometimes your home care package may assist with funding the solution, and other times, you may need to cover the costs personally. Either way, we're here to help you address safety concerns in and around your home.

Any risks or concerns will be included in your care plan so that we can work in partnership with you to improve the safety and functionality of your home and environment.



Home safety and equipment considerations

Safety and security are important to us all, and this is no different as we age.

We encourage all our consumers to regularly review their own home situation and to be mindful of health and mobility changes that might have an impact on personal safety.

We'll work with you to assess this more formally, but there's a lot you can do to be proactive and plan ahead to avoid potential problems in the future. We're here to help you work through the challenges of accepting help with your health, independence or mobility, so that you can adapt and find new ways to stay in control as much as possible.

Sometimes, these changes may also impact on others, such as family carers or paid support workers. We actively encourage people involved in your care to let you know if they've noticed something, and also advise your care manager so they can work with you to address the issue.

The Department of Health & Aged Care produce a list of items and services that are approved under a home care package. Safety for you and your care team is a priority for package funds, but it's important to note that not all items or supports automatically qualify.

The process for safety equipment and items may require some assessment from a qualified professional, such as an Occupational Therapist, Physio, Speech Pathologist, GP, nurse, and so forth - depending on the nature of the issue.

If recommendations are made, we'll work with you to decide how the equipment, product or service can be paid for.



Spotlight on Dementia and LGBTI older people

Australia is an incredibly diverse country and reflects the many communities of people that live side-by-side across both metropolitan and regional areas. While we celebrate many positive things together, some challenges can affect people regardless of who they are and to which community they identify as belonging.

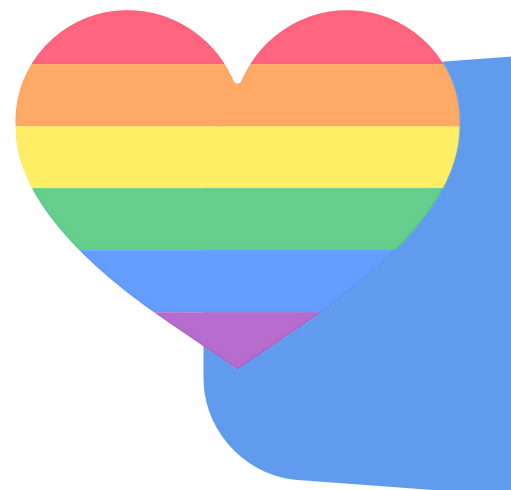
Dementia touches the lives of millions of older Australians, and it can be a challenging and isolating experience for those navigating the system and accessing aged care services. For older people from the LGBTI community who may have experienced discrimination in the past, that sense of isolation may discourage them from seeking assistance to understand their diagnosis or access necessary services in their home.

Dementia Australia has produced resources and information for older LGBTI people and their carers. The **LGBTI and Dementia Booklet** provides tips on how service providers can ensure they are respectful of, and responsive to, the preferences, needs and values of people living with dementia who are LGBTI, their care partners, and family and friends.

Some examples of how we show we are an LGBTI inclusive service provider:

- Our policies and practices reflect contemporary community values about inclusion and diversity,
- We make a genuine effort to make you feel welcome, respected and safe when in contact with us,
- We use LGBTI inclusive language and reflect diversity in our advertising materials and website,
- We ensure staff participate in training in inclusive practices and cultural safety.

You can download the Dementia and LGBTI booklet by [clicking here](#), or call the National Dementia Helpline on: 1800 100 500 to ask for a copy to be mailed to you.



Managing feedback and complaints using Open Disclosure

We strive to deliver quality services and supports to all our consumers, but we know that sometimes things might go wrong. We encourage and welcome your feedback or complaints so we can do our best to improve how we do things.

We follow a process called Open Disclosure. This means that we must take action when something goes wrong and to include you (or the complainant on your behalf) in this process.

Open Disclosure means that we must:

1. Check that you are OK and respond quickly to provide the support you need
2. Acknowledge the issue and apologise
3. Find out and explain what happened
4. Learn from the experience and make improvements.

We will be open and transparent, support you to participate in the conversation, and help you to make informed choices to get the best out of your care.

You have the right to include an advocate in the process if you would like to. You can get support from the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) by calling 1800 700 600, and you can also raise a concern or make a complaint by contacting the Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission on 1800 951 822.

The sooner we know that there is a problem, the sooner we can begin to resolve it, so please let us know if there is anything troubling you.



How to prepare for an Occupational Therapist home visit

Occupational Therapists are an important and highly regarded Allied Health professional in the lives of many of our consumers. OTs are regularly called upon to conduct in-home assessments and to make professional recommendations for aids, equipment, modifications and other solutions to issues and risks in the home.

Your home care package will pay for the cost of the Occupational Therapist Home Assessment, and may cover, or contribute to, the cost of their recommended solutions.

We will generally require the following information from the OT:

- Photos, measurements and diagrams of areas of concern,
- Options for hiring of some items or equipment, if applicable,
- Suggestions for lower-cost and creative solutions to mitigate any risks (these may be temporary solutions while funding is being arranged, or alternative solutions to enable more efficient use of funds in general).

The OT report doesn't guarantee that your home care package can or will fund all the recommendations made by the OT. There are a number of factors that must be considered, and we'll work with you to make the most appropriate decisions for your care and support.

Any approved spending needs to relate to your assessed care needs and be documented in your care plan, so we will update your care plan if required.

If you have any concerns about your safety at home or the suitability of your environment, please contact your care manager and we'll be happy to help arrange an assessment.



‘Interim’ Home Care Packages

Most consumers are aware that there are four levels of home care packages. Each of these levels attracts a prescribed amount of funding, designed to meet the care needs of the person. However, there are times when a consumer may be approved for a particular package level, but My Aged Care is only able to assign them a lower-level package in the interim.

This can be difficult for the person who may be trying to manage their high-care needs on a low-care package. We are conscious that people waiting for a package upgrade are particularly vulnerable to risks whilst their needs are not being met by the package funds. We will help you to prioritise your care needs so your available package funds are being directed where they are most needed.

Wherever possible, we will refer you for additional supports and services to supplement your package income. You may also like to contribute personally, if you have the financial means to do so. Once the higher-level package is assigned to you, these supplementary services and your personal contributions may be no longer needed.

My Aged Care will automatically upgrade you to the higher-level package when one is available and they will notify you, and us, as your provider, when this occurs. As soon as we are notified, we will arrange to review your care plan and package budget with you.

If you're on the waiting list for a higher level package but your current package level is meeting your needs, and/or you have unspent funds, you are advised to remain on your current package level. You can opt-out of the priority waitlist temporarily, and if your needs increase, you will go to the top of the list to receive your package upgrade.

Please let us know if you are struggling to have your needs met with your current package funds - we will support you to apply for a higher-level package or find alternative supports in the meantime.



The Dementia friendly home app

With 70 per cent of people with dementia living in the community, the Dementia Friendly Home app provides carers and family members with ideas to make a home more accessible for people living with dementia.

Making the home more dementia-friendly can allow the person to stay in their own home, enjoy their regular lifestyle activities and remain engaged with their community for longer.

Using interactive 3D game technology, the app places you in a 'virtual home' where you can discover how to make a home more suitable for people living with dementia.

You can then explore each room at your own pace and interact with objects, which allows you to immediately discover the impact a simple modification may have on improving the quality of the home environment.

One of the most popular features of the app is when you tap on a question mark, the pop-up tells you what you can do in that area of the home to make it dementia friendly.

Many of the app suggestions are small, inexpensive ideas that are easy to implement, such as labelling cupboard doors with pictures. As well as more significant changes, ranging from motion sensors to floor and wall coverings.

Based on the [10 Dementia Enabling Environment Principles](#), the app shows how a well-designed care environment can enable people living with dementia to make the best of everyday life.

Available for tablets and mobile phones, you can download the app via the link below:

<https://www.dementia.org.au/get-support/technology/dementia-friendly-home-app>



Word Search: Men's sheds Australia

I X Z F H E A L T H G R A Z
M I A S S O C I A T I O N D
A K Q S H E D S X W H D L T
T M F F A D Q N E F O X X C
E L D E R S D A Z S E K G E
S B L T I S Q P T S W B Z A
F H E Q N T S C Q K U F P H
P O X L G T E S T U M I O S
O W J N O J T Z A L H M D T
C M E T O N V D N K C P C O
O U A R E M G V T K N A A S
U X P V R O V I D R S C S P
F U E P T I S P N U Z T T P
S E V U A E N S E G D C J V

Find the 12 hidden words by searching for only the words in bold

- Men's Shed **Association** •**belonging** •community **projects** •local **events**
- podcast** •**sharing** information •1200+ **sheds** •like-minded **mates**
- positive **impact** •men's **health** •local **elders** •**cuppa** and a chat

Find a local shed: <https://mensshed.org/>

