

This just in!

Home Care Packages Update

September 2022 Edition

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 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 factors such as excessive drinking, physical inactivity, obesity, air pollution and poor nutrition.

GLCH runs daily social support groups for people of all ages and interests. To connect with our social support team call 5155 8370.



We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waters where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their continuing culture and enduring connection to country, and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Everyone is welcome at GLCH. We are committed to including all people, embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination.

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

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.uccelldesigns.com.au/>



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.

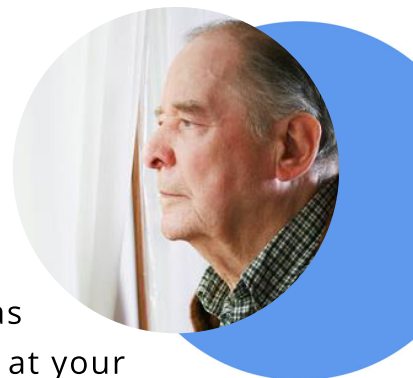
[Who would have thought a friendly hello could help lower your cortisol levels!](#)

And it just so happens that your care managers are experts when it comes to social prescribing.

Your wellbeing is our priority, so please get in touch to discuss your options for a wide range of meaningful activities, to keep you connected to your community.

Plus you might even make some new friends along the way!

Watch Julianne's video on the effects of social isolation here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMbRWNiauNE>



What is Social Prescribing?

Social prescribing (also known as community referral) was developed in recognition that the majority of factors affecting mental and physical ill health are social and economic, rather than medical. It's sort of like getting a prescription for a social remedy instead of being prescribed medication.

Although social prescribing is a pretty new idea in Australia, the UK's National Health Service have been using it as a way to tackle the global epidemic of loneliness for quite some time.

With one in five GP visits estimated to be for a reason likely to have a social cause rather than medical, social prescribing uses non-medical prescriptions that consider the whole person to make positive, meaningful changes to peoples health.

As well as needing friends, financial security and a safe home, it's also imperative to know we belong. Belonging gives us a sense of purpose and meaning, a feeling that we're part of something, and that we're connected to a group or community.

So whether you've been feeling lonely or isolated, or simply wanting to try something new, your care managers are here to help you connect with meaningful forms of social interaction, that might otherwise have seemed out of reach. Not only can they help you keep connected to your community and engaged with people, they are community connection experts!

So think about the types of activities that bring you joy, to guide your conversation with us. Also, be sure to check out Community Circles mentioned in this edition!



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.

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!

Take some time to think things through, so you remain in control of what you want to communicate as your wishes and preferences for yourself.



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, we will support you to participate in the conversation, and we will 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. 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.

Source: [AgedCareQuality.gov.au](https://agedcarequality.gov.au)



Temperature of your home can affect your wellbeing

Homes that are too hot or too cold are not ideal and can affect your health and wellbeing, according to researchers at the University of Adelaide. Their guide **'Thermal Comfort at Home: A guide for older South Australians'** recommends making personal adjustments across the seasons, to be most effective in maintaining optimal thermal comfort for you.

As we transition from one season to another, we often experience extreme variations in the temperature. Older people tend to spend most of their time at home, so chat with your family and friends or call your care manager about preparing your home and yourself for the change in seasons ahead.

In cold weather:

- Be as active as you can to increase circulation and produce body heat
- Dress warmly. Layers are good. Keep hands, feet and head warm
- Eat warming food like soups and stews or take a warming drink
- Use knee rugs or blankets and place a mat under your feet
- Let the sunshine in during the day, and close curtains to keep the warmth in at night

In hot weather:

- Reduce activity
- Wear light clothing, ideally cotton and linen
- Avoid going out in the heat of the day. Arrange outdoor activities for early morning or after the sun goes down
- Drink plenty of water, and eat light and cold foods
- Refresh with cool showers or a damp flannel placed behind your neck
- Keep blinds and curtains shut to reduce the heat coming through the window

The guide gives lots of great tips for heating and cooling options and provides excellent information about how our personal health & wellbeing is connected to thermal comfort in our homes.

You can download the Guide from this website [here](#)

Carers Gateway: Courses for carers

Like to know more about dealing with carer stress or getting a good night's sleep?

The latest Carer Wellbeing Survey showed that carers experience more symptoms of stress than non-carers, yet only one third were confident they could cope with the stress of caregiving.

Carer Gateway has a range of online courses you can work through at your own pace. If you don't have internet access, you can ask someone to print the workbook for you, which is a good way to keep information close at hand and remind you to put what you have learned into practice.

Module 1 is on dealing with stress. The course aims to help you to:

- gain a better understanding of options for dealing with stress
- develop action plans including things like exercise, time to yourself, hobbies and relaxation

Module 6 is on sleep. The course aims to help you to:

- develop strategies to manage your day after poor or no sleep
- develop a plan to improve your sleep

Other modules cover communication, connection, dealing with guilt, legal issues and more.

For assistance contact Carer Gateway on 1800 422 737 and ask to speak to a 'carer coach'.

<https://skills.carergateway.gov.au/>

