Care for Forgotten Australians
and Care Leavers

We are proud to provide trauma aware and healing informed aged care for Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers.

*Who are Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers?*

A group known as Forgotten Australians has been identified as having many challenges as they face the possibility of aged care. Forgotten Australians represent the 500,000 children that were placed into institutional and out-of-home care in Australia in the last century.

Of this group, 7,000 were former child migrants, 50,000 were indigenous children from the Stolen Generations and over 440,000 were non-indigenous children.

Many of these children experienced significant physical and emotional trauma as a result of being placed in institutional care as children and now, as an older group, are experiencing barriers to accessing aged care as a result.

We respect that not everyone will identify with the terminology ‘Forgotten Australians’. Some people prefer the term ‘Care Leaver’ or another term.

*Why do Forgotten Australians & Care Leavers need trauma aware and healing informed aged care?*

They were often lonely and exploited, subjected to punishment, rigid rules, humiliation, and suffered physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Many were denied an adequate education and were forced to work virtually as slaves for those entrusted with their care. Nutrition and health care were also poor, and many were subject to forced medical interventions.

This lack of identity, safety and care as children has often produced lifelong negative consequences for their wellbeing as adults. Trust in authority and institutions has been impacted and many have ongoing mental and physical health issues. Family and social relationships and skills were consistently impaired, and incarceration and substance abuse has resulted for many. Challenges with employment, housing and income security have been commonplace in their adult lives.

As they age, in many cases prematurely, the prospect of needing care may provoke a range of feelings including being truly frightened. They are aware that their past experiences may impact on their behaviour, needs and choices as they age.

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*What are we doing?*

As part of our commitment to person-centred care, we are embedding trauma aware and healing informed care for Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers.

Some excellent training and resources have been developed by Helping Hand Aged Care, called Real Care the Second Time Around, co-designed with some Forgotten Australians themselves.

We will do the training and use the resources in our teams to develop and embed our approach to trauma-informed care.

*Who do I tell if I am a Forgotten Australian or Care Leaver?*

You can tell any staff member that you trust – if you wish to. We will talk to you about what this means for you and the way we care for you.

You can tell us about your preferences, the things that ‘trigger’ you or make you feel afraid and remind you of sad times. You can tell us the things that are meaningful to you in the way we care for you, for example, would you prefer a male or female carer to undertake your personal care? Would you prefer your door is left open or closed? You can tell us if you would rather not participate in Mother’s Day or Christmas Day or any other activities.

If you are OK with us sharing the information, we will also make sure that others – such as doctors and allied health professionals – provide your care in a sensitive way.

If you would like to be connected with Care Leaver support networks, we will provide you with information about [local support]. These services are specially trained to provide support and advocacy to Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers. We may be able to arrange for them to visit you or give you a call. If you wish, they may be able to connect you with other care leavers. We can also provide you with the Real Care the Second Time Around resources.

*How can I learn more?*

* Talk about it to your care team
* Ask to be connected with a Care Leaver support service and/or to have a look at the Real Care the Second Time Around Resources
* You can ask us to find some books or information on the stories of Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers

You don’t have to share anything with us if you don’t want to. If you do, we will treat the information sensitively and share it only as needed to give you better care.

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