



PROBLEM STATEMENT

*DES2111: Service and
Transformation Design*

Blanche Deards

blanched@our.ecu.edu.au

10534719

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

People living in aged care find it hard adjusting to new environments. Despite having precious items, pictures of loved ones, furniture from their old house, and their favorite clothes, it is not quite the same. There then becomes a decline in mental health, which affects everyone in the facility, as well as the overall environment of the facility.

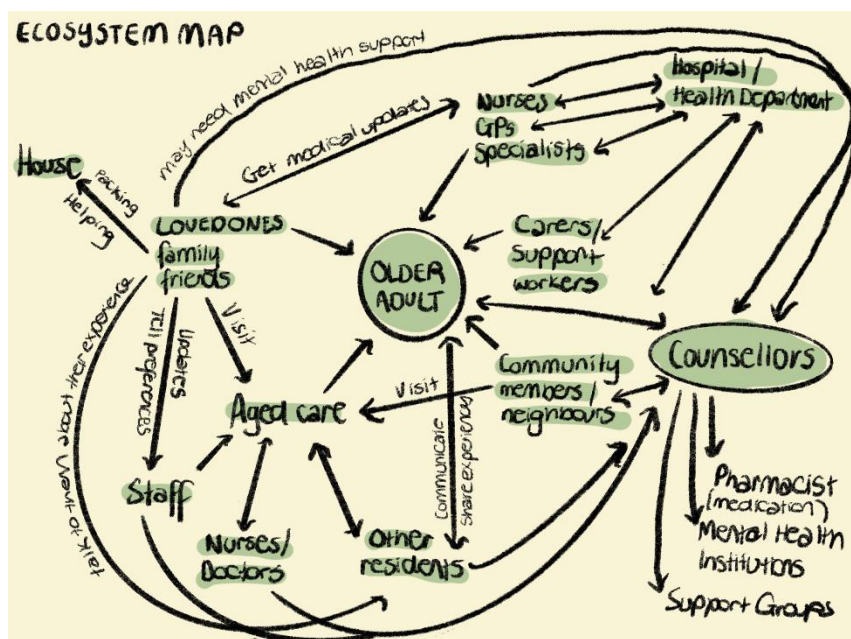
This is a pressing issue as up to **60% of those within residential aged care have at least one mental health diagnosis**, the majority with depression (Bhar et al., 2022).

Residents within permanent aged care deal with a variety of stress factors that cause mental health issues. This includes the **process of moving to a new environment, seeing loved ones less, a change in lifestyle, decline in mobility and senses, limited activity and socialisation, substandard living conditions, grief, and loneliness** (Amare et al., 2020).

Older adults tend to move to aged care when their life drastically changes, such as an accident or hospitalization, which leaves them no choice but to move from their home (Bhar et al., 2022).

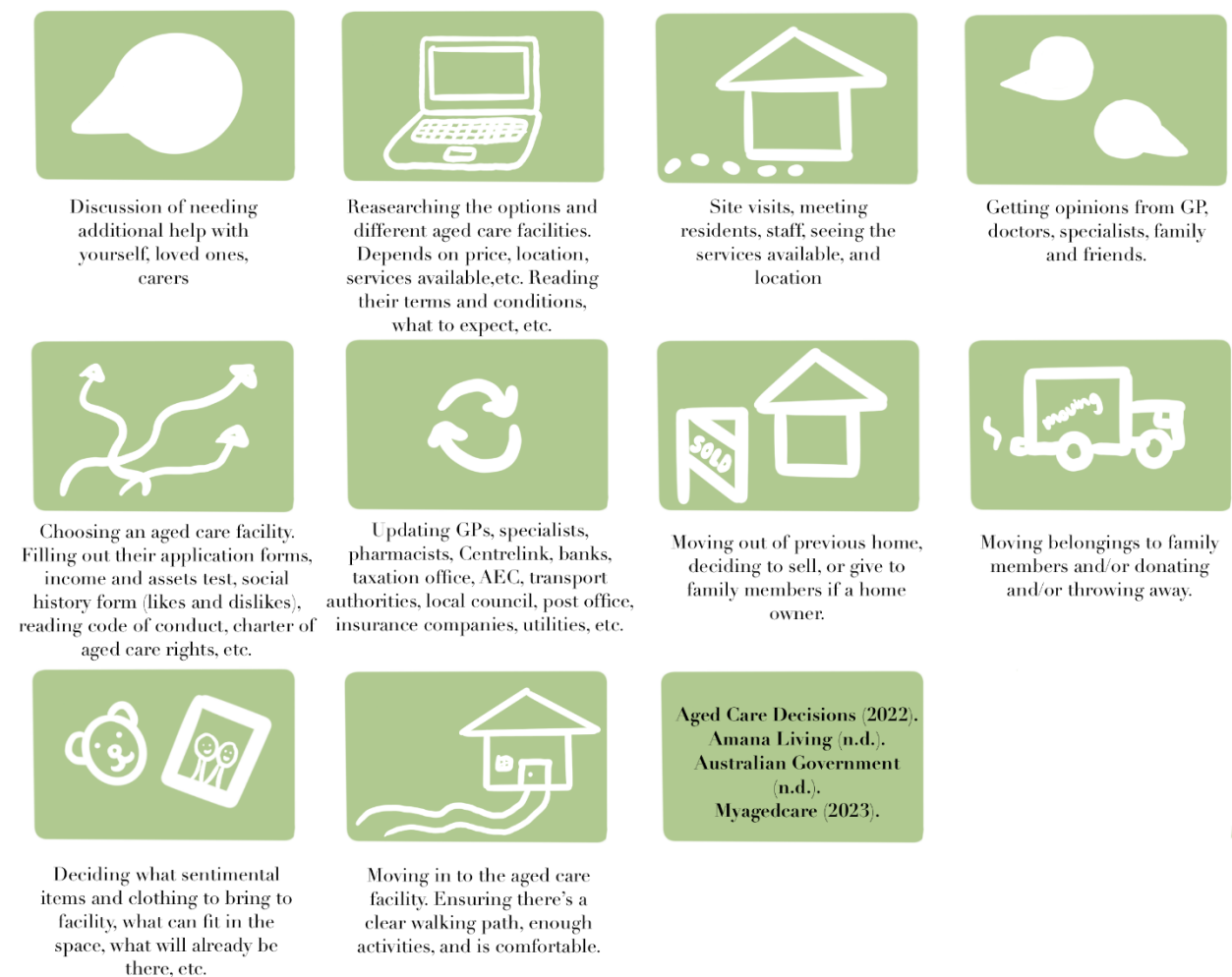
In addition, Amare et al. (2020) state that there are limited resources and access to mental health support for the older adult population, and **less than 14% of aged care facilities within Australia have psychologists and/or social workers**. This is a problem as older adults experience a higher level of vulnerability to mental health disorders and psychological stress, in comparison to the general population (Grunseit, 2013).

ECOSYSTEM MAP



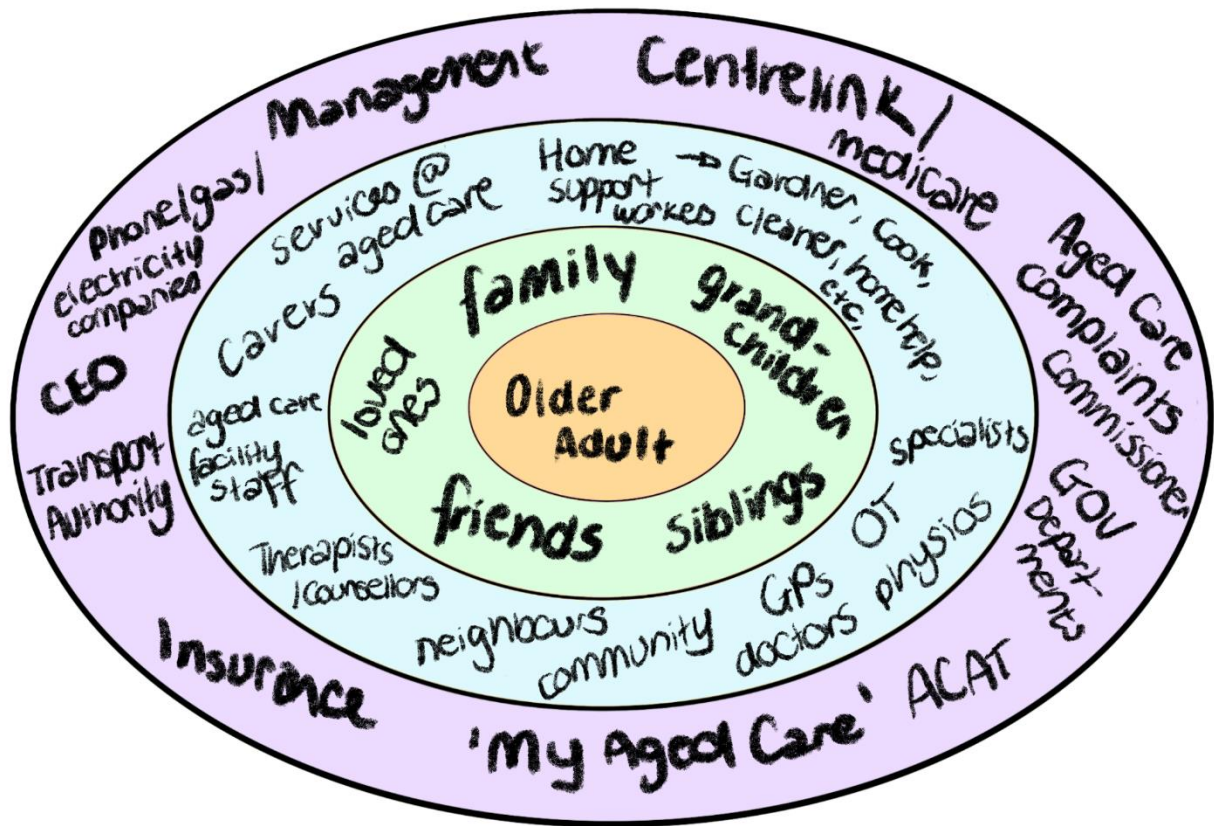
This is a rough idea of all the individuals that are involved within the transition between home and aged care, and how they may need counselling. Through this exercise, I have found that most, if not all individuals dealing with the older adult's transition, and those who work in the health care or aged care industry, all could benefit from counselling – not only just the older adult.

USER JOURNEY MAP



The user journey map highlights the extensive process of deciding to move to an aged care facility. Once they have chosen an aged care facility and are off the waiting list, the transition occurs quickly. This leaves residents little time to mentally process the transition, and inability to slowly adjust.

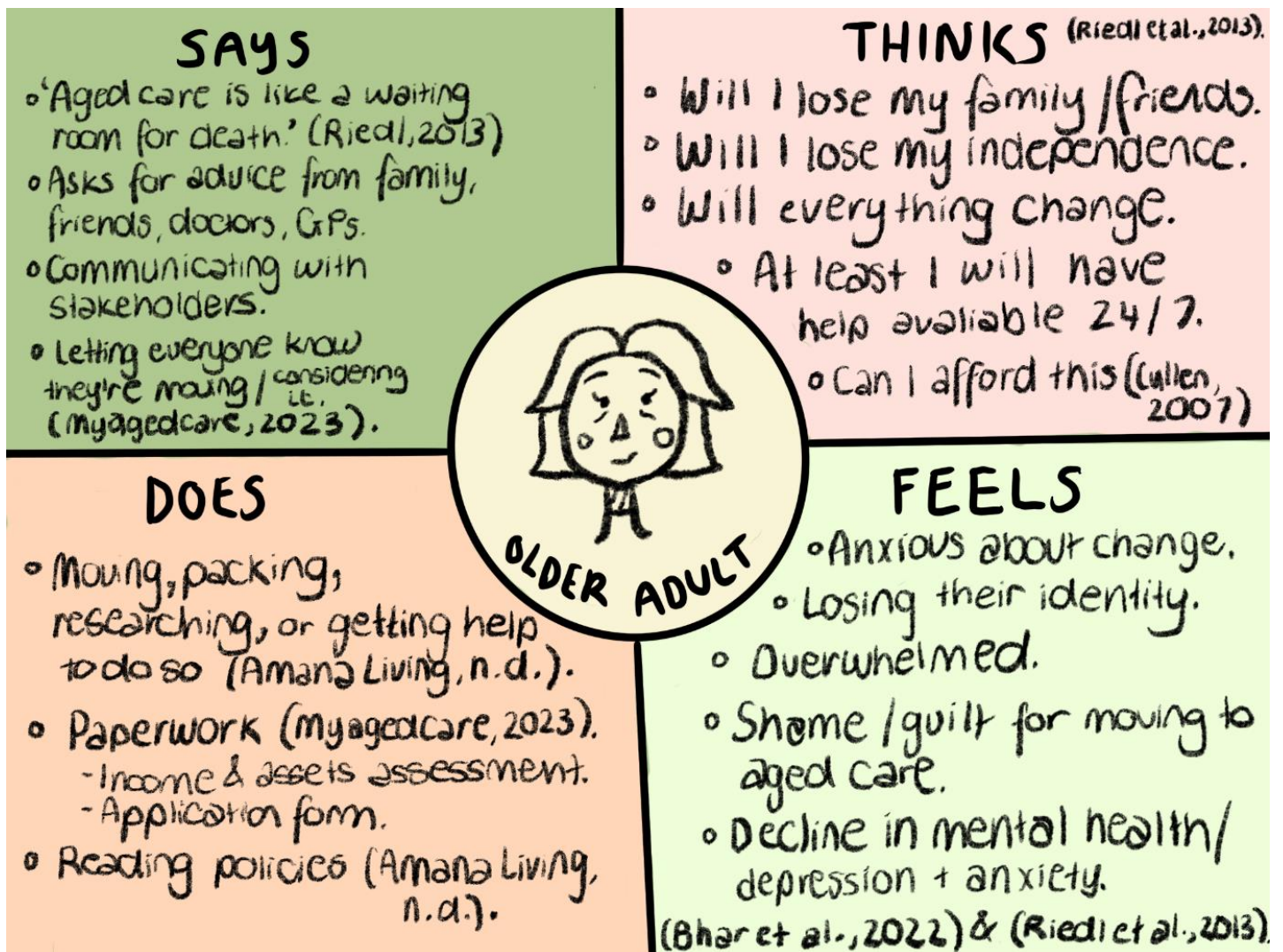
STAKEHOLDER MAP



The stakeholder map further outlines the extensive process of transitioning, highlighting all the relationships between the older adult, who they need to contact, ask for advice, etc. This does not capture all the stakeholders they may need to contact, there may be more or less, depending on the situation, and individual. This may cause further stress to the individual as well as their family/caretakers, especially if they are already in a position of stress from their physical health.

EMPATHY MAP

The empathy map identifies what the older adult might do, say, think and feel whilst in the process of deciding to move and/or transitioning. This further accentuates the fact that this is a complex process to handle both emotionally and physically.



PERSONAS & ARCHETYPES

The personas have been accumulated through numerous secondary research, and personal family experiences.

PERSONA 1 – Older adult who is in the process of transitioning.



MARGARET

- ★ Late 70s, almost 80
- ★ Retired
- ★ Widow
- 2 children in 30s
 - ↳ 1 lives in different state
 - ↳ 1 lives near but busy
- ★ 3 grandchildren under 10

- Need support to walk
- Hearing has declined
- Relies on child + child in law to help them → Both busy with work + kids
- Had a ^{permanent} accident, needs help getting up in the morning
- Active in community → Can't be as active anymore due to accident.
- ↳ Goes to the local library, goes to seniors events, talks to neighbours, etc.
- Walks dog every morning
- Volunteers to read to children
- Often babysits grandchildren

ARCHETYPES

- Thinks she doesn't need help / Denial
- Wants to be independent
- Concerned about losing her lifestyle
- Fears she'll lose connection with grandchildren
- Knows that living in aged care is the best option

PERSONA 2 – Older adult who has just transitioned.



LINDA

- Early 80s
- Divorced
- One child
- 3 grandchildren teens/young adults
- Used to live with child + grandchildren

- Didn't want to move to aged care but knew it was for the best
- Family tries to visit as much as possible, but busy with work/school/university
 - ↳ They are starting to visit less & less as time progresses
- Finding it difficult to find things to do, used to being there for grandchildren
- Decline in mental health
- Sees a counsellor

ARCHETYPES

- Constantly worried about family / misses them
- Second guessing her decision
- Doesn't feel like doing activities → depressed
- Finding it hard to deal with change as it was so sudden
- Finds it hard to open up to counsellor

DESIGN PROBLEM INSIGHTS

OBSERVATION: NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS AGED CARE FACILITY

WHAT COULD HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS?	WHY?	WHY?	WHY?	INSIGHT
Find it hard adjusting to new environment (Bhar et al., 2022).	Routines and quality of life aren't the same (Australian Government, 2021).	Doesn't feel like home.	The move was too rapid and wasn't prepared for drastic change.	<i>Need a slower transition from home to aged care.</i>
Lack of community (Bhar et al., 2022).	People already have negative attitudes about being in aged care (Riedl, et al., 2013).	Therefore, they may not get along with other people.	Toxic environment, everyone else has a negative attitude.	<i>Needs to be a shift in attitude, to increase community spirit.</i>
Decline in mental health (Government of Western Australia, 2023).	Don't get to see family and friends as often (Riedl, et al., 2013).	Family and friends don't have to worry about them as much.	Family and friends know they're getting the help they need.	<i>The facility needs to encourage visits, make it accessible and cheaper to travel.</i>
Little mental health support within aged care (Draper, et al., 2013).	Limited accessibility and funding subsidies (Cations et al., 2022).	Stigma on mental health and needing counselling.	Lack of mental health knowledge within older adults.	<i>More mental health awareness and encouragement on seeking help within the older adult community. Also,</i>

				<i>mental health subsidies.</i>
Staff attitudes and treatment (Hodgkin et al., 2017).	Toxic work environment (Hodgkin et al., 2017).	Older adult patients have a negative attitude which affects their mood.	Older adults find it hard to adjust, have a lack of community, decline in mental health and support (Draper, et al., 2013).	<i>Need counselling and mental health support for the workers as well.</i>

SOLUTIONS ATTEMPTED IN THE PAST

Each of these services and initiatives aim to reinforce positive aging, discussing aging and conversation around mental health within older people, and offer support.

Umbrella Community Care

Umbrella (2022) is a service that runs social groups and activities for seniors. They also have a home care package, where they match an elderly person with a worker, specifically from multicultural, multilingual, multifaith or LGBTI+ communities. This encourages conversation regarding their issues, and an overall companion to keep them company.

City of Fremantle – Positive Ageing

The City of Fremantle (2023) has created an “age friendly city plan” where they offer events, activities, and assistance for older adults. This shifts attitudes towards growing older, and encourages older adults to join in on activities, and meet new people, to better their mental health.

NMHS Mental Health Program for Older Adults

NMHS (2021) is an organization that offers mental health services for older adults. This includes therapy services, psychiatric and medical diagnosis, general mental health assessments, etc.

Multicultural Services Centre (MSCWA)

MSCWA (2022) offers a home support program, which includes a multicultural wellness program. This is for those who are from diverse backgrounds, with workers who are from a variety of different cultures.

Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Services

This service is specifically designed for women from multicultural backgrounds and is a holistic service. They offer social support, including a carers support group (Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Services, 2019).

FOCUS AREA/ DESIGN PROBLEM

Throughout researching older adults' experiences, the key reasons as to why older adults have a decline in mental health is due to the rapid transition from home to permanent aged care, and lack of mental health resources.

Those in aged care should feel that they are a part of a community and positive environment, to better their mental health, and outlook on their situation. In addition, this will improve relationships between staff members and older adults.

For residents to have a sense of community, what must be changed includes the pre-existing negative attitudes towards aged care facilities, greater mental health support, and a slower transition between home to aged care.

Bettering mental health within older adults will not only make them feel comfortable in aged care facilities, but also decrease risk of disability and even mortality (Amare et al., 2020).

REDEFINED PROBLEM STATEMENT/FOCUS AREA/DESIGN PROBLEM

“Due to the stressful nature of the home to aged care transition, residents experience a development of mental health issues and lack of positive attitudes. Overall, creating a pessimistic environment for both residents and staff.

How might we improve the environment of aged care facilities to increase community spirit and the mental health of both residents and staff?”

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I hope to design a way to boost the mental health of older adults in permanent aged care facilities. Although I am unable to fix the bigger problem, the mental health crisis within the aged care industry, a simple and small design may make an impact and encourage more conversations and solutions.

REFERENCES

Aged Care Decisions (2022). *Tips for settling a loved one into Aged Care*. Aged Care Decisions.

<https://agedcaredecisions.com.au/settling-into-aged-care/>

Amana Living (n.d.). *Welcome to Lady McCusker Home*. [Booklet]. Amana Living.

Amare, A. T., Caughey, G. E., Whitehead, C., Lang, C. E., Bray, S. C., Corlis, M., Visvanathan, R.,

Wesselingh, S., & Inacio, M. C. (2020). The prevalence, trends and determinants of mental health disorders in older Australians living in permanent residential aged care:

Implications for policy and quality of aged care services. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 54(12), 1200–1211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0004867420945367>

Australian Government (2021). *Aged care - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*. (2021).

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/aged-care>

Australian Government (n.d.). *Charter of aged care rights*. [Booklet]. Australian Government

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

Bhar, S., Koder, D., Jayaram, H., Silver, M., & Davison, T. (2022). Addressing Mental Health in

Aged Care Residents. *Advances in Psychiatry and Behavioral Health*, 2(1), 183–191.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypsc.2022.06.002>

Cations, M., Collier, L. R., Caughey, G., Bartholomaeus, J., Lang, C., Crotty, M., Harvey, G.,

Wesselingh, S., Corlis, M., & Inacio, M. C. (2022). Government-subsidised mental health services are underused in Australian residential aged care facilities. *Australian Health*

Review, 46(4), 432–441. <https://doi.org/10.1071/ah22049>

City of Fremantle (2023). *Positive ageing*. City of Fremantle.

<https://www.fremantle.wa.gov.au/positiveageing>

Cullen, D. (2007). The financial impact of entering aged care. *Australasian Journal on*

Ageing, 26(3), 145–147. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-6612.2007.00240.x>

Draper, B., Jochelson, T., Kitching, D., Snowdon, J., Brodaty, H., & Russell, B. (2003). Mental health

service delivery to older people in New South Wales: perceptions of aged care, adult

mental health and mental health services for older people. *Australian and New Zealand*

Journal of Psychiatry, 37(6), 735–740. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440->

[1614.2003.01259.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-1614.2003.01259.x)

Government of Western Australia (2023). *Older Adults*. Mental Health Commission.

<https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/your-health-and-wellbeing/older-adults/>

Grunseit, A. C. (2013). *Age, Gender, Social Contacts, and Psychological Distress: Findings From the*

45 and Up Study - Philayrath Phongsavan, Anne C. Grunseit, Adrian Bauman, Dorothy

Broom, Julie Byles, Judith Clarke, Sally Redman, Don Nutbeam, for the SEEF Project, for the

SEEF Project, 2013. *Journal of Aging and Health*. [https://journals-sagepub-](https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.ecu.edu.au/doi/10.1177/0898264313497510)

[com.ezproxy.ecu.edu.au/doi/10.1177/0898264313497510](https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.ecu.edu.au/doi/10.1177/0898264313497510)

Hodgkin, S., Warburton, J., Savy, P., & Moore, M. (2017). Workforce Crisis in Residential Aged

Care: Insights from Rural, Older Workers. *Australian Journal of Public*

Administration, 76(1), 93–105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12204>

Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Services. (2019). *Ishar Multicultural Women's Health*

Services. <https://www.ishar.org.au/social-support>

Meaningful Ageing Australia (n.d.). *Transitioning to residential aged care*. [Pamphlet]. Spiritual

care considerations series.

MSCWA (2022). *Multicultural services centre of Western Australia*. <https://www.mscwa.com.au/>

Myagedcare (2023). *What to expect when moving into an aged care home*. Myagedcare.gov.au.

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/what-expect-when-moving-aged-care-home>

North Metropolitan Health Service (2021). *Older Adult Mental Health Services*. NMHS.

<https://www.nmhs.health.wa.gov.au/Hospitals-and-Services/Mental-Health/Specialties/Older>

Riedl, M., Mantovan, F., & Them, C. (2013). Being a Nursing Home Resident: A Challenge to One's Identity. *Nursing Research and Practice*, 2013, 1–9.

<https://doi.org/10.1155/2013/932381>

My aged care (n.d.). *Short-term care services*. (2023). Myagedcare.gov.au.

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/short-term-care#>

Umbrella (2022). *At Home Care Umbrella Community Care*. Umbrella Community Care.

<https://umbrellacommunitycare.com.au/services/at-home-care/>