



Tips for Careworkers: People with Specific Needs

What it is: Some people may have specific care needs related to their cultural or linguistic (language) background, sexuality, religious or faith beliefs, life circumstance or location. People may identify with one or more of these attributes.

Why it matters: Culture is not just about language, ethnicity or nationality. It is also about identity and relationships, and shared (sometimes painful) experiences.

Events early in life may significantly affect health and wellbeing in later life. Understanding the person's circumstances is an important part of person-centred care.

What I need to know: There are many recognised specific groups in aged care which include people who:

- identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- live in rural or remote areas
- are financially or socially disadvantaged
- are veterans of the Australian Defence Force or an allied defence force and their spouse, widow or widower
- are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless
- are care leavers (people who spent time in care as a child, Forgotten Australians, Former Child Migrants and Stolen Generations)

- as parents, were separated from their children by forced adoption or removal
- identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender or intersex (LGBTI)
- are refugees or asylum seekers
- are prisoners.

It is important to be aware of people's privacy and know who you may share information with.

Note

Everyone is a unique person with their own life and life story. Some issues are complex, you may or may not be able to help them. If you have concerns talk with nursing/supervisory staff.

Do

If you are uncertain about a person's culture, beliefs or specific needs, ask questions in a respectful way, for example "Good morning Mrs xxx, could I ask you about something?"

Do

Ask "Are there religious or cultural practices that affect the way you wish to be cared for?" or "Is there anything I need to know about you and your preferences in order to care for you?"

Name:

My reflections:

When meeting someone you will be caring for how do I respectfully understand their specific needs?

Sometimes in caring for people we learn things about them which do not affect their care. How can I respect their care yet address things that I have learnt that are of concern?

My notes:

See related palliAGED Practice
Tip Sheets:
Anxiety
Case Conferences
Continuity of Care

References used to develop this sheet are available at
www.palliaged.com.au