

Newsletter  
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AT YOUR SERVICE<sup>TM</sup>  
HOME CARE  
HOME CARE DONE RIGHT



## SPOTLIGHT ON LONELINESS



## WHAT'S INSIDE

- WHAT IS SOCIAL PRESCRIBING?
- PET THERAPY BENEFITS
- FEATURED PRODUCT
- BRAIN HEALTH RESOURCE
- FREE EVENTS FOR CARERS

# 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>



# 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 people's 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.



# 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.

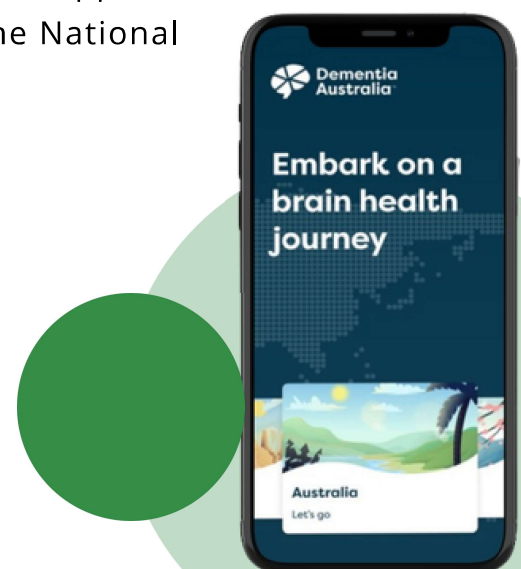
Users 'travel to a new country' every month to complete a series of games, and if they have any concerns about their results, the app can easily generate a pdf report to share with their GP.

"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.



# 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 Dogs SA](#): SA

[Therapy Paws Tasmania](#): TAS



# 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.



# 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.





# Free online events for carers!

## **Simply Mindful - Guided meditations and mindfulness - (on demand)**

In partnership with Carers Australia, Simply Mindful have created a series of on demand mindfulness sessions for carers. The sessions cover managing anxiety, sleep, 'on the go' mindfulness and self-compassion. [Learn more >](#)

## **October 8th - National Gallery Australia - Art for carers online**

Held monthly, this is a social and creative online program for carers around Australia, to learn about and discuss artworks from the National Gallery collection. [Learn more >](#)

## **October 17th - Understanding dementia**

This session provides an introduction to dementia including an overview of different types of dementia, diagnosis, planning ahead and how to support someone living with dementia. [Learn more >](#)

\*\*Need help getting online? The Good Things Foundation can help:

<https://goodthingsaustralia.org/learn/>



# 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/>

