MICARE MAGAZINE

APRIL 2024

EMPOWERING MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION

EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK

MAJOR REFORMS TO AGED CARE ARE ON THE WAY!

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MICARE WEBSITE

Denise Marsh is our Princess Margriet Village resident and long time MiCare volunteer. She has been involved in running the kiosk at Overbeek Lodge, visiting Elders in our Aged Care home and now she is a volunteer with MiShop.

Our Volunteer Liduina

Table of Contents

Getting better all the time

Getting better all the time is a well known song by the Beatles released in 1967. It is song that is meant to help the listener feel optimistic about what is ahead. Thankfully this is something that MiCare can relate to in 2024.

After the past few tumultuous years, our emphasis on the continuous improvement approach (which means constantly looking for ways we can do better) has provided results we are proud of. We are seeing growth in a number of our programs, namely in our migrant services, community based programs and support at home programs. Funding in residential aged care homes has provided some relief and has helped us to begin improvements in our buildings.

We must acknowledge our devoted and committed staff who are building relationships with our clients and Elders. We know that residents and clients feel their support and relationships are central to their valued experience. The same can be said about our volunteers who spend their own time in developing friendships with people who may be isolated. This is also the year that we resumed face to face meetings with the Community Advisory Committees which continue to provide valuable feedback to the Board. Their suggested improvements, as small as they may seem, help to create a more meaningful and valued environment and experience.

Much has been written about continuous improvement but it fundamentally means that it's an ongoing effort to improve all aspects of our services and programs. Sometimes these improvements are big and sometimes they are small, very small, but what is important to us is that these are frequent and make life for our clients and Elders a little better.

We are very much looking forward to 2024; we have hope and optimism that things are getting better all the time! We know that MiCare is in good hands, with solid leadership from our board, strong teamwork and extraordinary support. Thank you to all for contributing and being a part of the MiCare team and community.

Jos van den Ven

Chairperson

Petra Neeleman

Executive Director

Empowering Multicultural Communities through Education: A Look into MiCare's Multicultural Learning Groups

~ Warren Brewer - Education Co-ordinator

Our students - Right to Left - Yoe Khin, Mulaer Alu, Nyange Chirac, Regina Kitungano, Yvone Angalikiyana, and Ma Nge. MiCare staff member Warren Brewer at the board.

In the bustling and diverse city of Melbourne, the fusion of cultures creates a vibrant tapestry that enriches the community. However, within this diversity lies a need for educational support tailored to the unique linguistic and cultural backgrounds of its residents. Addressing this need, our organization proudly runs over nine Multicultural Learning Groups, offering both online and face-to-face classes across inner south, outer western, and southern metropolitan Melbourne.

The primary goal of these classes is to provide comprehensive support for the development of essential skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Additionally, the programs focus on enhancing comprehension, memory retention, and recall. The emphasis is not just on skill acquisition but also on practical application, with a strong emphasis on pathways into further study, education, volunteering, training, and employment.

Our students - Right to Left - Yoe Khin, Mulaer Alu, Nyange Chirac, Regina Kitungano, Yvone Angalikiyana, Ma Nge and Ma Mgway.

In 2023, we had the privilege of assisting over 135 students many of whom come from multicultural backgrounds. These students have diverse aspirations, but they all share a common goal: to improve their skills and access opportunities for personal and professional growth. Through our Multicultural Learning Groups, we have seen remarkable transformations in our students' abilities and confidence levels, empowering them to navigate the challenges of daily life with newfound skills and knowledge.

One of the most significant achievements of our program is the number of students who have transitioned into our Apprenticeship and Traineeship program. This transition highlights the effectiveness of our approach in preparing individuals for the workforce, equipping them with the necessary skills to succeed in their chosen fields.

To ensure the success of our programs, we leverage various resources and platforms to enhance the learning experience. For digital literacy, we utilize resources such as

BeConnected (https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/) and Microsoft's Digital Literacy program (https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/digital-literacy) to empower our students with essential digital skills. For language learning, we incorporate materials from BBC Learning English (https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/), which offers a wide range of resources to support English language acquisition.

Looking ahead, we are committed to expanding our reach and impact, reaching out to more individuals who can benefit from our programs. Our goal is to continue providing quality education and support to multicultural communities, empowering them to achieve their full potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

In conclusion, our Multicultural Learning Groups are not just about education; they are about empowerment and inclusion. By providing tailored support and resources, we are breaking down barriers and opening doors for individuals from diverse backgrounds. As we move forward, we invite the community to join us in our mission to create a more equitable and empowered society through education.

Major reforms to Aged Care are on the way!

~ Despina Haralambopoulos - GM Aged and Migrant services

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has called for large scale reforms that are transforming the Aged Care Sector.

The reforms are aimed at improving the way aged care services are delivered, improving standards of care to older people, strengthening the leadership and culture of services as well as improving transparency in the aged care sector.

The reform process has started. Some of the changes already introduced by the Government include:

- A new Aged Care Code of Conduct. The new Code prescribes the expected behaviours of governing persons and staff.
- More stringent requirements for the governing bodies of aged care providers and their key personnel.
- Residents and Clients having a greater voice in the governance of their services through Quality and Consumer Advisory bodies.
- The tightening of Home Care fees.
- Publicly available Star Ratings for aged care providers. These are currently available for residential aged care services. Home Care is to follow.
- Stricter requirements around the use of restraints in residential aged care and the reporting of Serious Incidents within home and community care.
- A requirement of Registered Nurses in every facility 24 hours a days, 7 days per week.
- A requirement of Mandatory 200 minutes of care time per resident per day (including 40 RN minutes).
- Wage increases for Aged Care workers.

More changes are on the way!

From 1 July 2024, the Government is planning to introduce a new Aged Care Act, strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards and a new Regulatory Model, but it is unclear if this timeline will be met.

What you need to know about:

The Aged Care Act

The Royal Commission found that the current Aged Care Act is no longer fit for purpose. The new Act will introduce a new "person-centred" aged care system that includes a Statement of Rights, and will:

- Provide a system of aged care based on a universal right to high quality, safe and timely support and care.
- Protect and advance the rights of older people receiving aged care to be free from mistreatment and neglect, and harm from poor quality or unsafe care, and to continue to enjoy rights of social participation accessible to members of society.
- Enable people entitled to aged care to exercise choice and control in the planning and delivery of their care.
- Outline the overarching purposes of the legislation to assist the courts and others to interpret the new legislative framework.

- Provide a goal of providing sustainable funding arrangements for the delivery of funded aged care services by a diverse, trained and skilled workforce.
- Set new obligations for providers and workers and expand the powers of the regulators.
- Provide the legal basis for the strengthened Quality Standards and the new Regulatory Model.

The Strengthened Quality Standards

The Royal Commission found that the existing Standards only set out minimum acceptable standards for accreditation and did not motivate and empower providers to achieve high quality care and outcomes for older people.

The Standards will reduce the number of Standards from eight to seven, consolidate some areas covered by each of the Standards and introduce a new "Food and Nutrition" Standard.

The new Standards are:
- Standard 1: The Person
- Standard 2: The Organisation
- Standard 3: The Care and Services
- Standard 4: The Environment
- Standard 5: Clinical Care
- Standard 6: Food and Nutrition
- Standard 7: The Residential Community

All 7 Standards apply to residential aged care services while only Standard 1- 5 apply to Home Care.

The New Regulatory Model

According to the Royal Commission a new way of regulating the industry must be developed because:

"Ineffective regulation has been one of the contributing factors to the high levels of substandard care in Australia's aged care system. Regulation should seek to prevent harm to people receiving aged care services and ensure that instances of substandard care are detected and addressed."

The new Regulatory Model aims to make regulation more streamlined and less "one-size-fits-all". Providers will have to meet registration conditions and re-register every three years.

The new model intends to be:
Rights-based
Person-centred
Risk-proportionate.
Focused on continuous improvement.

Future changes
A New Support at Home Program
The Support at Home program replaces the current Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), Home Care Packages (HCP) Program and the Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) Programme.
The program aims to continue to support older people to live at home independently and intends to provide:
• Equitable access to supports to meet assessed aged care needs
• Timely access to high-quality support
• An efficient system that adds social value
• A responsive system, which is easy to navigate
• A financially sustainable system

What are the key changes?
• A single program- Commonwealth Home Support Program, Home Care Packages and Short-term Restorative Care program will be brought together into 1 program.
• A focus on independence - Upfront supports will be provided to stay active and independent.
• All clients will have budgets - there will be 11 budget levels with reassessment to higher levels as needs increase.
• Reasonable prices – Service prices and client fees will be set by government. Services will be invoiced after they have been delivered.
The roll out of the Support at Home program has been delayed and will be implemented in 2 stages.
• Stage 1- Support at Home replaces Home Care Packages (HCP) and Short-Term Restorative Care – to be implemented by July 2025.
• Stage 2 - Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) transitions into Support at Home- to be implemented no earlier than July 2027.

MiCare is committed to the delivery of safe quality care and services.
We look forward to working together with our Elders, their representatives, and other key stakeholders to develop stronger and more responsive aged care services.

Complexities of Aged Care Fees and Charges: A Challenge for Elderly Family Members

~ Susan Caithness - Admissions Officer VIC

Prins Willem Alexander Lodge room

As our society continues to age, the demand for quality aged care services has increased, making it crucial for families to weigh their options and find suitable care for their elderly loved ones. However, one of the current issues surrounding Aged care entry is the difficulty in understanding the complex fees and charges associated with these services. This problem is particularly challenging for all concerned who are responsible for making crucial decisions.

With the assistance of their experienced Admissions Officer and a comprehensive system called Resident Select, MiCare aims to simplify the process and provide families with a close estimate of fees and charges while awaiting the outcome of government income and assets testing.

The Complexity of Aged Care Fees and Charges:
The Aged care system includes various fees and charges that can be overwhelming for anyone unfamiliar with the process.

'MICARE RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF GUIDING FAMILIES THROUGH THE INTRICATE PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING AGED CARE FEES.'

The Australian Government administers these fees, and their complexity stems from the aim of ensuring fairness while providing financial sustainability for Aged care providers. This labyrinth of fees can be perplexing, leaving families struggling to grasp the overall financial implications of Aged care placements.

MiCare recognizes the importance of guiding families through the intricate process of understanding aged care fees. To address this issue, it has an experienced Admissions Officer on staff. Drawing upon years of experience, the Admissions Officer serves as a valuable resource, offering assistance and support to families undertaking the transition. They provide personalized guidance to help families understand the fee structure, ensuring they have a clear picture of what to expect.

Resident Select: Simplifying Fee Estimation:
In addition to the expertise of the Admissions Officer, MiCare utilises a sophisticated system called Resident Select. This system assists families by providing them with a close estimate of the fees and charges that apply while they await the outcome of government income and assets testing. Although this system is not definitive and only a guide, families can have a clearer understanding of the financial implications associated with aged care entry.

Through Resident Select, families can input relevant information such as income, assets, and other factors. The system then calculates an estimation of the fees and charges that they may expect to pay, taking into account the individual's specific circumstances. This transparency helps families make informed decisions and plan more effectively for their loved one's aged care needs.

Accommodation Payments:
One of the key areas of concern for people is the accommodation payment, also known as the Refundable Accommodation Deposit (RAD). This payment covers the accommodation costs and is refunded to the individual or their estate upon exit from the facility. However, navigating the various factors determining the RAD, such as the size and quality of the room, location, and facility amenities, can help people decide their best option.

Means-Tested Care Fees:
Another layer of complexity within Aged care fees is the means-tested care fee. This fee is based on an individual's assessable income and assets, and it serves to contribute towards the cost of care. Calculating this fee involves considering factors such as pensions, investments, and property.

Additional Charges:
Beyond the primary fees mentioned above, aged care services may also encompass additional charges depending on individual circumstances. Such charges may include service fees, extra service fees for optional amenities, and charges for additional services like hairdressing or therapy sessions. Each facility may have varying fee structures so it is worth asking what these may be.

With the support of government resources, financial advisors, advocacy groups and an experienced Admissions Officer, families can better understand and manage the financial implications of Aged care, ensuring their loved ones receive the highest quality care possible.

MiCare's Prins Willem Alexander Village residents (left to right) - Elder Gerrit, Ineke, Henk, Davis, Anna and Walter

Retirement Village community living

~ Penni Michael - Deputy CEO

At the heart of successful community living is the care and support that neighbours provide to each other. This support network plays a vital role in ensuring the well-being of all residents. Whether it's lending a helping hand with daily tasks or offering companionship and emotional support, the sense of community fosters a supportive environment where individuals can thrive.

However, community living, especially in retirement villages, often comes with a set of rules or by-laws that help regulate various aspects of communal living. These guidelines are designed to ensure that the community functions smoothly and that the needs and preferences of all residents are taken into account. For example, rules regarding pet ownership are common, with some residents enjoying the companionship of pets while others may prefer not to have them around.

Clear guidelines regarding pets and their care are usually outlined by the retirement village management to maintain harmony within the community.

Community living in retirement villages is a concept that blends independence with social connectivity, offering a unique lifestyle for those in their later years. It involves a group of people residing in a complex where they share communal spaces, land, gardens, and amenities while also having their own individual units and private gardens. This arrangement not only provides a sense of community but also ensures that residents have their own personal space and privacy.

One of the most appealing aspects of community living for retirees is the opportunity it presents to meet new people and forge connections and friendships.

MiCare's Princess Margriet Village residents (left to right) - Elders Homa, Valerie, Lee, Valerie, Violet, Max, Verna, Jenelle, Michelle, Denise and Johanna

The social aspect of these communities is often a significant draw, as it allows individuals to remain engaged and active in a supportive environment.

The decision to move into a retirement village is a significant one, and it is essential for individuals to consider various factors before making this choice. The Victorian government has issued a booklet to assist people in making informed decisions about retirement village living, emphasizing the need for careful consideration and professional advice. MiCare's Retirement Village Managers in Queensland and Victoria echo this sentiment, encouraging prospective residents to visit the village multiple times, accompanied by friends or family, to get a feel for the environment and make an informed decision.

The reasons for choosing to live in a retirement village are diverse and personal.

While the community environment is a significant attraction, other factors such as health considerations, the need for social interaction, access to organised activities, and the safety and security offered by retirement village living also play a role. Some individuals also view retirement village living as an opportunity to plan ahead for their future needs, recognizing that their requirements may change over time. Community living in retirement villages offers a unique blend of independence and support, providing residents with the opportunity to maintain their autonomy while enjoying the benefits of a supportive community. By fostering an environment where care and support are readily available, retirement villages create an ideal setting for retirees to thrive in their later years. However, it is crucial for individuals to carefully consider their needs and seek professional advice when making the decision to transition to retirement village living.

Effective Teamwork

~ Melita Virginie - HR Advisor / Talent Acquisition

When considering what it means to form part of an 'effective team', images of a sports team in action immediately spring to mind.

In footy, the team comprises 18 players who occupy different positions - forward, midfield and defence.Every role is important, and significant investment goes into the physical and mental training of players to ensure they perform optimally in the game. Team effectiveness is made visible when the players work in unison to gain possession of the ball, kicking, handballing, running and kicking a goal, often to deafening cheers of spectators. The ultimate achievement for every footy team is to win the Grand Final! Effective teamwork is visible in all the team sports, basketball, soccer, cricket, baseball, rugby, netball, hockey, at the pool or track and field when the relay team touches the board or passes the baton, so the next member can contribute their expertise.

The parts that are not visible within an effective team are the intricacies that make it possible for a group of people to work together in positive synergy. In accordance, with HR theory, Hackman maintains that three essential conditions must exist to ensure effective teamwork – a compelling direction (clear goals to guide the team), a strong culture (well-designed systems, duties, norms) and a supportive context (resources, rewards, relationships).Further, Belbin confirms that there are 9 main roles that people play in teams, each with its strengths and weaknesses.The team members bring either social, thinking and action-oriented characteristics. Best practice is to aim for a balanced team with a mixture of different roles.

There are, of course, common obstacles that prevent teams from reaching their full potential, which have been identified by Lencioni as absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability and inattention to results. Moreover, Tuckman explains that all teams go through stages of development, forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning because as team members change, the dynamics of a team do too.

Effective teamwork is similar in the workplace. MiCare seeks to attract and retain a talented workforce in accordance with best practice.

The organisation invests in the ongoing mandatory training of all employees and makes a commitment to career development

MiCare Migrant service team, Werribee - (Left to right) Ban, Lian, Kate, Sarah, Fedaa, Severina, Sanaz, Jane and Saw

ensuring all persons can deliver their best in the workplace.

At MiCare, our vision is to 'support the journey of migrants throughout their lives'. Our mission is to 'enable migrants to have comfortable, enjoyable, dignified and meaningful lives'. Our ethos are, 'Enabling you to live in your world, as we provide services that suit your culture, spirituality and language'. Our values are trust, empowerment, flexibility, harmony and empathy. Unique to MiCare is our 'Eden Alternative Philosophy' which encourages the fostering of positive workplace relationships to empower our workforce to contribute best practice quality care, as they strive to eliminate the plagues of loneliness, helplessness, and boredom that Elders and clients may experience. Our staff are employed in a multitude of different roles

(nurses, carers, cleaners, laundry assistants, chefs, kitchen hands, accountants, IT, HR, project officers, settlement workers, service coordinators, care managers), across four main program areas (Business Services, Business Support, Aged and Migrant Services and Residential)but we are united by the same overarching vision, mission, ethos, values and guided by our unique 'Eden Alternative Philosophy'.

The achievement of our work is regularly measured by our Elders and clients and other stakeholder feedback processes, our continued growth, advocacy in the sector, and meeting the stringent Aged Care Standards, Department of Human Services Standards and relevant legislative requirements. It is evidence that the MiCare team largely works as an effective team, which should be celebrated.

'MICARE SEEKS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN A TALENTED WORKFORCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH BEST PRACTICE.'

Addressing Workforce Shortages through Migration

~ Annabel Henderson - Policy, Quality and Risk Coordinator

MiCare staff member Saw Lin and the MiCare client- Mulaer Alu

It is well reported in the media and through individual experiences, that industries across Australia continue to face workforce shortages. This impacts on their ability to deliver services or even open th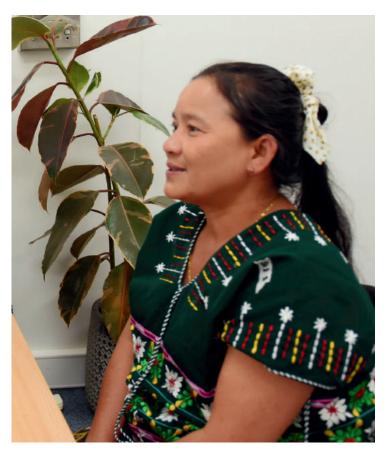eir doors. Job vacancies in health care and social services remain the highest of any industry (Ceda 2023), with significant impacts being faced by Aged Care providers. Australia has faced

labour shortages in the past, but recent shortages have further been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, an ageing population, and impacts of the current high costs of living. As well as better employment support for existing Australians, sustainable migration is needed to ensure that we don't face such shortages again and key services, including Aged Care, continue to provide an appropriate quality of service.

Creating a more inclusive workforce that celebrates equality and diversity for all is key to addressing workforce shortages and upskilling or reskilling Australians. Most Australian workforces fall short when it comes to being inclusive of people from a non-English speaking background. There is a lack of opportunities for both new and already established migrants with low English skills and no training or experience in Australia. More recognition of training and qualifications gained overseas is required, with a focus on upskilling new and established migrants through bridging courses and employment pathways rather than industries requiring them to retrain.

Support and guidance should also be given to industries to provide opportunities for people with low English skills by providing functional and industry specific language support and training whilst on the job.

Women, particularly migrant women, face additional barriers to employment. Access to affordable housing, convenient and affordable childcare, and health and mental health supports will all contribute to women being able to play an active role in our society and economy. No one is able to address their employment barriers if their basic needs are not being addressed. Economic security of women can be increased by working with

MiCare client San San Aye

industries directly to create strategies that can support migrant women. This could include industry specific training, ESL support during employment, and career and study pathways. Providing a clear pathway of support for women directly from study to employment will assist to address gaps currently faced by women.

MiCare has been drawing on clients seeking training and employment through our Migrant Services programs to help address gaps in workforce shortages.
Ensuring that new migrants to Australia have access to equitable workplaces that can support and embrace differences will not only mean addressing workforce shortages, but also improves the quality and richness of our workplaces. Our staff bring a range of skills, education backgrounds, cultural knowledge, and personal attributes to their role, which makes MiCare such an interesting place to work.

Computer literacy for older people

~ Alexis Hughes - Project Officer

Our staff member Leisa helping our resident Denise

'THERE ARE PLENTY OF FREE SERVICES WHICH OFFER ONE-TO-ONE INSTRUCTION OR GROUP LESSONS.'

An 84-year-old friend recently asked me how to make a payment via internet banking. I obliged. I also demonstrated how to use texts on her mobile phone but she rejected this measure. She does not know how to switch her phone off which is problematic when we go to concerts. She messed up booking a restaurant when it was made via an online booking platform. The restaurant was closed when we turned up for dinner.

I don't think my friend is alone in her difficulties with IT. She belongs to one percent of the population who can remember ration cards after WW2, Bundy clocks, phones with dials and typewriters which were used for business correspondence. She is as sharp as a tack but is slowing down physically. She lives alone and does not have a great grandchild who can show her new tricks on her smart TV, her computer and her tablet.

Yes, she has all these goodies but only uses their basic functions which may not be enough for the future.

My friend belongs to the demographic which is the biggest user of aged care services. Older people like her are being encouraged to age in their own homes where they can maintain their activities in the community and access the help they need to live independently. This presupposes she can navigate MyAgedCare when the time comes. Even MiCare staff find this an endless source of frustration. If she needs to renew her passport, she will go through MyGov. Good luck with that. Increasingly, entertainments such as the ballet, concerts, theatre and restaurants need to be booked via the internet. Municipal libraries now have an ''app''. Ditto with some group doctors' and allied health practices. Add to that the move towards a cashless society, the phasing out of cheques and the closure of local bank branches which means that internet banking is becoming a must. In addition, contact with Government services such as Centrelink and Medicare via their websites is becoming more commonplace as waiting times on the phone or in their offices become unbearable. Completing forms online will be the next challenge because they can be quite tricky. On the question of care, heaven knows how older people will fare if they want to fully self-manage their home care packages because they will need to choose and roster aged care workers, monitor and manage a simple budget, review bank statements, keep records and receipts for all payments, pay invoices with a debit card, online or over the phone and manage reporting activities.

Information Technology (IT) is now unavoidable. This means that older people need to be encouraged to use it more frequently and competently for their day-to-day activities. The question is how? On this, I hear older people say they want to talk to a real person when they use a community service such as a bank. They also like social get-togethers, so why not combine the two features?

A Google search reveals a surprising number of services which are aimed at assisting older people master IT.

There are plenty of free services which offer one-to-one instruction or group lessons. Local libraries do this. So do some neighbourhood houses and retirement villages. I have recently heard of a country service which accommodates a group of 30 Seniors who go out to coffee after their lessons.

The Commonwealth Department of Social Services conducts a program called "Be Connected" which offers free online access to personalised IT support and mentoring. Its website contains written help in plain English and several community languages on IT and how to use mobile phones, tablets and computers. It covers a myriad of subjects such as how to download and save a document, booking travel, adopting cyber security measures, social media, games, banking, understanding the Cloud and keeping up with friends. Webinars are also available.

The Department also offers funding to those agencies which want to set up a service to help older people become more proficient in IT. (In fact, a past recipient was Digital Sisters which serves migrant and refugee women.) Thinking out loud, perhaps this is an opportunity for aged care volunteers or providers to seek funding to provide training on IT to individuals or groups of Elders. Even better, they could form a helpline for those Elders who need immediate assistance sorting out a problem. There is also commercial assistance available for seniors through sites such as ReadyTechGo, Geeks2U, Greyology and Seniors Tech and Tea. Some of these services may be restricted to a geographical area.

It is clear that the Government wants older people to become computer literate but it is not clear how it has made its IT assistance known to the target group. The writer falls into the catchment group but only found out about Be Connected when researching this article. Government agencies need to forcefully promote IT assistance together with agencies funded for this purpose. If they haven't already done so, aged care services could add IT assistance to their social support activities.

Learning new computer skills can be fun and can be rewarding in more ways than one especially when social activities are involved.

Overcoming Obstacles

~ Kerryn Cook - PA to Executive Director

Sometimes life throws problems at us that we would never have foreseen in our lives. The pressure of modern living is seeing all of us having to deal with more complex issues that can, sometimes, feel like they have no solution. I don't think anyone could answer honestly that they have never felt the grip of anxiety and feeling overwhelmed - it's become a way of life for many of us.

I thought I would share with you some of the strategies that I have adopted that have helped me deal with today's pressurised world.

Meditation – this doesn't necessarily mean that you need to sit cross legged on the floor with your eyes closed for hours on end hoping your problems go away. It is more about allowing your mind to relax (stop racing) and take a moment to think quietly and rationally about what might be going on in your life. You might find sitting in your favourite chair with a cup of tea or even a walk quietly on your own is the best way to relax your mind. There are many resources on the internet and some great free apps available if you're unsure where to start. Taking a moment to relax your mind can help with perspective when you're feeling overwhelmed.

Exercise – this doesn't mean run off and join the gym (which you can if you want). Regular movement is known to improve mental health. We are so blessed in Australia to have so many beautiful outdoor spaces – use them! Take a walk with a friend (you'll walk twice as far as you planned once you start chatting) or visit the park with your kids. I truly enjoy doing yoga and during lockdowns when studios were closed we used modern technology and streamed YouTube sessions – they cost nothing and the whole family got involved.

Time with Family & Friends – whether it be family or friends, staying connected to people is imperative to our wellbeing. Maybe you don't have a large family or a wide circle of friends. Guess what? You're not alone. There are many people searching for connections and many groups out there that help facilitate. It can be daunting attending an event where you don't know anyone but get over that hurdle and who knows, you might find yourself with a new confidence you didn't know you had.

Talk to Someone – reach out and talk to someone if you are struggling. Most employers offer an EAP (Employee Assistance Program) or you might have someone close to you that you can confide in. You might find there are others in your circle that have had to deal with similar issues. The saying of a problem shared is a problem halved is so true and sometimes having a different perspective can help you sort out the best way forward.

Write It Down – like chatting with someone, journalling is a great way to get out what's in your head so it's a little easier to deal with. I keep a notebook and pen by my bed for those nights when the thoughts just won't stop going round. Putting them down in writing (or scribbling) can really assist with putting things into perspective and then thinking rationally for solutions.

None of these strategies is new and I certainly didn't invent them. They were offered to me by friends, family and colleagues who had also found them useful and are just a few of the tactics that I used to navigate a particularly challenging time of my life.

As hard at it seems some days, just remember this is only a point in time and it will pass. We might not always be able to overcome the obstacles that life throws at us, but finding ways to navigate and keep moving forward is key. I hope you find them as useful as I did.

Addressing the Demand for Memory Support Beds in Aged Care

~ Susan Caithness - Admissions Officer VIC

The Aged care industry is facing a growing demand for memory support beds as the prevalence of dementia continues to rise. Families seeking specialised care for their loved ones suffering from dementia often encounter lengthy waitlists. However, Avondrust Lodge is taking a proactive approach to address this issue by providing a safe and supportive environment for Elders in mainstream households, while also offering a dedicated Memory Support Household for those who require advanced care.

The Approach of Avondrust Lodge:
Avondrust Lodge understands the importance of addressing the needs of Elders with dementia promptly and compassionately. While recognising the scarcity of memory support beds, the Home has taken a proactive stance to provide a safe and supportive environment for all Elders, regardless of their level of dementia progression.

Creating Safe and Supportive Households:
Avondrust Lodge ensures that households are equipped to cater to the specific needs of Elders with dementia. Trained and compassionate staff members are well-versed in dementia care, enabling them to provide a high level of personalised attention to Elders. Regular safety assessments are conducted, and modifications are made to ensure a secure living environment that minimises the risk of accidents.

The Provision of Memory Support Household:
In cases where an Elder's dementia has progressed to a level that necessitates specialised care, Avondrust Lodge offers a dedicated Memory Support Household. This unit is designed specifically to meet the needs of individuals with advanced stages of dementia. It provides a supportive environment with trained staff who offer 24/7 supervision, memory enhancement activities, and cognitive therapies.

The Goal: Meeting the Diverse Needs:
Avondrust Lodge aims to meet the diverse needs of Elders suffering from dementia. By providing a range of care options, they ensure that every individual receives the appropriate level of support. This approach not only addresses the issue of limited memory support beds but also offers families peace of mind knowing that their loved ones are receiving the care they require in a secure and nurturing environment.

As the Aged care industry struggles with the demand for memory support beds, Avondrust Lodge stands out for its commitment to meeting the needs of Elders with dementia. Through the provision of safe and supportive mainstream households, as well as a dedicated Memory Support Household, they demonstrate their dedication to ensuring that each resident receives tailored care. Avondrust Lodge's approach serves as a testament to their commitment to providing a high standard of care in the face of challenges within the aged care industry.

Loneliness

~ Penni Michael - Deputy CEO

Feeling lonely is very much a personal response. Some people feel lonely occasionally while others experience it as a chronic condition, in other words it is something they have felt for a very long time. Loneliness has caught the attention of many health professionals for more than 10 years and late last year the World Health Organization launched an international commission on loneliness, which the WHO states can be as bad for people's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. The international commission on the problem is led by the US surgeon general, Dr Vivek Murthy, and the African Union youth envoy, Chido Mpemba and is expected to run for three years.

Though our need to connect is part of being human, many of us have felt alone at various points in our life. Sometimes loneliness is felt in certain situations like being disconnected from friends and family, losing a partner and/or a very close friend, staying at home with young children or ageing and experiencing limitations with everyday life. The reasons for feeling lonely are as many and as varied as there are people; it is very much a felt experience and the reasons for feeling lonely may only relate to you.

The accepted definition of loneliness is that it is the state of distress or discomfort that results when one perceives a gap between

one's desires for social connection and actual experiences of it. Even some people who are surrounded by others throughout the day can still experience a deep and general loneliness.

A number of unfavourable outcomes have been linked to loneliness. In addition to its association with depressive symptoms and other forms of mental illness, loneliness is a risk factor for heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and arthritis, among other diseases. Lonely people are also twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease, research suggests. The state of chronic loneliness may trigger adverse physiological responses such as the increased production of stress hormones, hindered sleep, and weakened immunity.

The news from Dr Vivek Murthy warns that loneliness and isolation affect people of all ages especially children and older people. While it may be a "new" crisis for some people today, it has long been a crisis for the ageing population, especially those in long-term care.

Exposing loneliness has been the focus of The Eden Alternative since its inception. Our vision, "To eliminate loneliness, helplessness, and boredom", has driven our pursuit of person-directed relationship-centered care for 30 years said our Executive Director, Petra Neeleman.

The Ten Principles of The Eden Alternative® are foundational for cultural change and provide structure around addressing loneliness. Principle One states, "Loneliness, helplessness, and boredom are painful and destructive to our health and well-being." Principle Three states, "We thrive when we have easy access to the companionship we desire. This is the antidote to loneliness."

As we work with people partnering in care, our focus benefits by building relationships with each other

between care partners; among staff members; between staff, clients and Elders; family members; and between clients and Elders and clients and Elders. These relationships can then serve as a building block for community building.

To help us understand loneliness we ask ourselves if and how we have experienced loneliness. Our own lived experience enables us to be more empathetic to our clients and Elders. For example, have we felt a lack of social connectedness and has this been painful?

A commonly used measure of loneliness, the UCLA Loneliness Scale (which has been revised many times), asks individuals about a range of feelings or lack of connection, including how often they:
- feel they lack companionship
- feel left out
- feel "in tune" with people around them
- feel outgoing and friendly
- feel there are people they can turn to

There are about 20 items in the questionnaire and this can be accessed on line for those that are interested.

Given the potential health consequences for those who feel like they have few or no supportive social connections, widespread loneliness poses a major societal challenge. It is very hard for people who feel lonely to reach out and connect with others. It is not just about being with other people, it is important that these connections are meaningful and purposeful. The Eden Alternative is helping us to find ways to do just that, to provide meaningful relationships with each other. We constantly look for ways to make those connections, sometimes working in the garden, singing with others, or taking care of pets. The important thing is to respond to a person's need for connection that is peculiar to them and is done with care and kindness.

Social Engineering

~ Jamie Neeleman - IT Manager

Social engineering refers to the manipulation of individuals to divulge sensitive information, grant unauthorized access, or perform actions that may compromise security. As technology advances, so do the methods employed by malicious people to exploit us. This article aims to shed light on the various social engineering tactics, their risks, and effective strategies to fight social engineering.

Types of Social Engineering Attacks

A. Phishing
Phishing involves deceiving individuals into providing sensitive information through seemingly legitimate communication. Examples include fraudulent emails, messages, or websites mimicking trusted entities. Techniques may range from creating a sense of urgency to employing sophisticated replicas of official correspondence.

B. Pretexting
Pretexting involves the creation of a fabricated scenario or pretext to extract information. This could be a false identity or a made-up situation designed to manipulate your emotions and gain your trust.

C. Baiting
Baiting lures individuals into compromising situations by offering something enticing. This could be a free download, an attractive link, or a USB drive left intentionally in a public space. Once the bait is taken, malicious software or actions can be initiated.

D. Quizzes and Surveys
Attackers may deploy seemingly harmless quizzes or surveys to gather personal information. The information obtained is then used to tailor subsequent social engineering attacks especially through Social Media and other means.

E. Impersonation

Impersonation involves pretending to be someone else to gain trust or access. This could be done through various means, such as phone calls, emails, or even in-person interactions.

Real-world Examples

Understanding social engineering risks is crucial and learning from high-profile cases provides valuable insights into the diverse tactics employed by attackers. Real-world examples help underscore the importance of vigilance and the need for robust security measures.

Psychological Aspects of Social Engineering

Social engineering exploits psychological vulnerabilities, leveraging principles of influence and persuasion. Recognizing these aspects is vital for developing effective mitigation strategies.

A. Influence and Persuasion

Understanding the principles of influence, such as reciprocity, commitment, and authority, helps individuals recognize when they are being manipulated.

B. Exploiting Trust

Social engineers often exploit trust to gain access or information. This section explores how trust can be manipulated and offers guidance on maintaining a healthy scepticism.

C. Creating a Sense of Urgency

Many social engineering attacks create a fabricated sense of urgency to prompt immediate action. Recognising and resisting this pressure is crucial for preventing successful attacks.

Recognising Social Engineering Attacks

Educating individuals on recognising the signs of social engineering is a fundamental aspect of cybersecurity.

This is why MiCare's new training platform also includes a cybersecurity training module to assist our staff in learning how to be aware and protect MiCare and themselves in their own personal lives not just at work.

Mitigation Strategies

A. Education and Training

Regularly educating individuals about social engineering tactics and providing training on recognising and responding to potential threats is a proactive defense.

B. Multi-factor Authentication

Implementing multi-factor authentication adds an extra layer of security, making it more challenging for attackers to gain unauthorised access.

C. Incident Response Plans

Having well-defined incident response plans ensures a swift and effective reaction to social engineering incidents, minimizing potential damage.

D. Regular Security Audits

Conducting regular security audits helps identify vulnerabilities, ensuring that security measures are up-to-date and effective against evolving social engineering tactics.

In conclusion, comprehending the risks associated with social engineering and implementing effective mitigation strategies are critical components of any cybersecurity strategy. By fostering awareness and maintaining a vigilant and informed workforce, organisations and individuals can significantly reduce the likelihood of falling victim to social engineering attacks.

Blue Zone

~ Penni Michael- Deputy CEO

'THE STRONG SOCIAL BONDS WITHIN THESE COMMUNITIES PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF STRESS AND PROMOTING OVERALL WELL-BEING.'

Several years ago, I had the pleasure of reading "The Blue Zones" by Dan Buettner, a captivating exploration of the lifestyles and habits of the world's longest-lived people. While not a medical book, it does offer valuable insights derived from the author's and his team's social science research, shedding light on the factors that contribute to longevity and well-being.

Buettner introduces the concept of Blue Zones, areas around the world with a remarkable number of centenarians. These regions, including Ikaria in Greece, Okinawa in Japan, Sardinia in Italy, Loma Linda in California, and the Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica, share common characteristics that promote long and healthy lives.

While dietary habits are an essential component, Buettner emphasizes that there are numerous other factors at play.

One striking aspect of Blue Zones is the significance placed on rituals around food and eating. These communities prioritise local food supplies and communal meals, often enjoyed with family and friends. Despite their diverse cultures, they share common lifestyle practices such as minimising stress, regular physical activity throughout the day, having a sense of purpose, and consuming a predominantly plant-based diet. Interestingly, some Blue Zone residents consume alcohol moderately, usually with meals, while others have a preference for specific beverages like green tea or coffee.

The emphasis on constant movement in daily life is notable. Instead of structured exercise routines, Blue Zone inhabitants engage in natural physical activities like walking, carrying groceries, playing with children, and tending to household chores and gardens. This approach to physical activity aligns with their overall lifestyle of simplicity and practicality. Stress reduction is another key element of life in Blue Zones. While modern life is often associated with high stress levels, these communities

prioritise sharing their worries, seeking support from family and friends, and accepting help when needed. The strong social bonds within these communities play a crucial role in mitigating the impact of stress and promoting overall well-being.

Dietary habits in Blue Zones are characterized by a mostly plant-based diet with moderate consumption of meat and fish. Beans and legumes are staples, while sugar is limited and often enjoyed as a treat. Locally grown, whole foods are preferred, and nothing goes to waste. Snacking on nuts and seeds is common, providing a source of healthy fats and nutrients.

"The Blue Zones" offers not only insights into these remarkable communities but also practical tips and recipes for incorporating their lifestyle habits into our own lives. One of the most inspiring aspects is the sense of purpose and community that permeates these societies. People of all ages are valued and contribute meaningfully to their families and communities, fostering a sense of gratitude and fulfillment that is integral to their longevity and well-being.

MiCare Easter Market Day

Montrose Community Cupboard - Pat along with volunteers

MiShop Stall selling gift hampers

On the 23rd of March 2024, Margriet Manor, a part of MiCare's community, buzzed with excitement as it hosted the Easter Market Day. This vibrant event brought together residents, families, and local organizations for a day filled with fun, food, and community spirit.

The Montrose Community Cupboard stall showcased their commitment to supporting those in need, while Grandmothers for Refugees shared their heartfelt mission through their stall.
One of the highlights of the day was the display of clocks made by Elders from Avondrust Lodge. These unique creations showcased the talent and creativity of the residents.

MiShop, MiCare's online store, offered Easter hampers. These thoughtfully curated hampers were a perfect gift for loved ones or a treat for oneself, showcasing local products and supporting small businesses.

No community event is complete without delicious food, and the Easter Market Day did not disappoint. A food stall served up sausage sizzles, cakes, and refreshing drinks.

The true heart of the event was the participation of Margriet Manor's residents. Their presence and support added a special touch to the day, highlighting the strong sense of community and belonging that defines MiCare's retirement villages.

The Easter market day was a celebration of community, creativity, and compassion, showcasing the best of what MiCare and its residents have to offer.

MiCare Enquiry stall - Left - MiCare volunteer Denise along with MiCare staff Heidi, Yvonne and Mercedes.
Right - Alice with the Dutch lollies stall

MiCare volunteer Albert helping with stall selling John's clocks. Elder John is our resident at Avondrust Lodge, Carrum Downs.

Grandmothers for Refugees stall. Our resident Valerine (left) along with Evll and Lesley

Our Volunteer Ena Lewis (in the center) with her stall along with her team

MiShop - MiCare's Online store

Grazing snack box

Rejuvenate & pamper box

The Big Bang

Unwind your day

MiShop, MiCare's online store, is your go-to for perfectly curated gift hampers that take the guesswork out of gift-giving. These hampers are not only meaningful but also support local community and businesses. Each product is carefully selected for its quality and thoughtfulness, ensuring that the hampers are suitable for all ages. Whether you're looking for a gift for a loved one or a treat for yourself, MiShop's gift hampers are sure to delight.

Visit our website - www.micare.com.au/mishop/ or scan the QR Code and start shopping!

ORDER NOW

Thank you from the MiCare family!

Your support of MiCare and our mission is appreciated by those who need it most, such as clients within our social support groups, residents in our homes and to the people in our joint partner settlement projects.

None of our work would be possible without our incredible staff, volunteers, donors and supporters. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and support in helping MiCare improve the quality of life for the many migrants and refugees we support. Thank you for being a very important part of our growing MiCare family.

MiCare Retirement living resident Brigette with her dog Chloe

How can you contribute

We sometimes need help so we can help others who rely on us. Ways in which you can contribute:

- Donating
- Volunteering
- Becoming an associate member

For general enquiries and information please feel free to call us on 1800 MICARE (1800 642 273), email info@micare.com.au or visit www.micare.com.au

MiCare Retirement living resident Johanna with her dog Abby

Elder Corrie with carer Marina