



Aged Care Mentoring Guidelines

Queensland Home Care Workforce Support Program
Consortium

workforce.cotaqld.org.au

We all have lived experience

This guide is intended to be used for connecting students and personal care workers to an older person with lived experience of the Aged Care sector.



Diversity is what makes each of us unique. Diversity includes our backgrounds, personal characteristics, beliefs, values, and life experience.

There is also a great deal of diversity in ageing and the ageing process. Many older people bring an array of interests, knowledge, and authentic experiences from their lives.

This guide has been developed for you based on the learnings of the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland pilot Aged Care mentoring program as part of the Home Care Workforce Support Program.

Aged Care Mentoring Guidelines

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What is Aged Care Mentoring?

Mentoring is certainly not a new phenomenon. Many professions, including those in Aged Care, have programs that connect experienced workers to those with less experience as a way to guide them through the challenges of their role. Mentees are guided to further develop their competency; problem solving skills and boost their potential.

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland has trialled a program that links older people in the community with lived experience of Aged Care to students and new personal care workers. This program has provided opportunities for meaningful connection with older people whilst supporting personal care workers and students in their new roles.

The older volunteers in this program are:

- aged 65 and older.
- come from a variety of diverse backgrounds.
- have cared for individuals personally or professionally.
- Have personal experience of the ageing process.
- In some instances are now receiving Aged Care services themselves.



Why engage with an older person?

Older people bring unique life experience and wisdom that comes as we age. The Benevolent Society's survey on ageism indicated that people often lack awareness about the positive aspects of an older person's life. Many people – for a variety of reasons – do not have regular contact with or have had opportunities to connect with an older person in their lives.

Through our Aged Care mentoring program, we have found that connecting Aged Care mentors to students and new personal care workers brings many benefits including:

- Learning about the process of ageing and the personal impacts of ageism.
- Opportunities to discuss and role play real life scenarios such as dignity of risk, carrying out personal care tasks, how to be resilient in your role, the importance of reporting changes in a client's condition to a supervisor.
- Mentors supporting students to understand what working in the Aged Care sector is really like.
- How to cope with the death of a client you have been caring for.
- Opportunities to fine tune soft skills such as active listening, building trust and learning about people from diverse backgrounds.
- Older volunteers report that the mentoring role helps them feel as though they are making a contribution to their community and in turn this helps improve well being and social isolation

By engaging an Aged Care mentor, you are offering a service that is independent of your organisation and is not in a direct reporting relationship.



How to make Aged Care Mentoring work for you

Mentoring is most effective in a casual, relaxed setting. This could be in the classroom, a library, community centre, a coffee shop or any environment that suits both parties.

Mentoring can be delivered one-on-one or in small group settings.

We have found that face-to-face connections offer a more meaningful experience for everyone, however, mentoring can also take place via video conferencing platforms or if appropriate, over the telephone.

Aged Care Mentoring is:

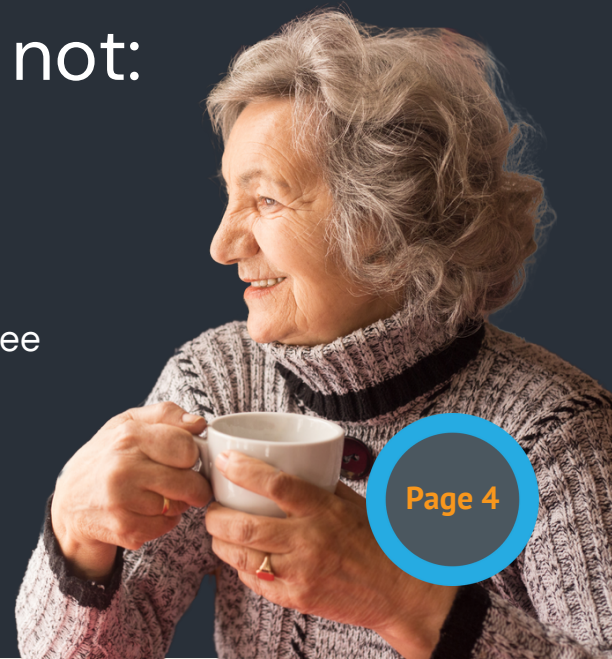


- Listening objectively
- Questioning
- Being non-judgemental
- Providing advice and guidance
- Sharing lived experience stories of person-centred care

Aged Care Mentoring is not:



- Training
- Counselling
- Coaching
- A replacement for an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



Where can I find Volunteer Aged Care Mentors?

There are many older people in your community with lived experience that can become mentors to students and new personal care workers. Many bring knowledge and experience from professional and/or personal involvement in the Aged Care sector.

A good place to start is to connect with a local Senior Citizen's centre, Senior's Group or an organisation such as University of the ThirdAge (U3A) or Your Caring Way. Other organisations are listed at the end of this resource.

Volunteering organisations such as Volunteering Queensland can also assist with the recruitment and screening of suitable volunteers.



Useful Information and Resources

Volunteering Queensland

Volunteering Queensland is the state peak body for volunteering and provides support and assistance to organisations all over Queensland. You can find helpful resources at volunteeringqld.org.au.

Your Caring Way

Carers come from all walks of life and bring valuable knowledge and skills from their experience. Your Caring Way provides support and training to unpaid carers to enable them to rejoin the workforce or gain experience through volunteering. More information can be found at yourcaringway.com.au or carersqld.com.au.

LGBTIQ+ Health Australia

LGBTIQ+ Health Australia has various resources for LGBTIQ+ Ageing and Aged Care in Australia as well as their Silver Rainbow Aged Care training and can assist you to find a LGBTIQ+ mentor in your area. More information can be found at www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/silver_rainbow.

Centre for Cultural Diversity in Australia

The centre for Cultural Diversity in Australia supports Aged Care service providers to support the needs of older people from culturally and linguistically (CALD) backgrounds. Many useful resources can be found [here](#)

Lotus Place– Forgotten Australians

Older people in Australia who experienced childhood trauma are now entering aged care. These people are known as Forgotten Australians, Stolen Generations, Former Child Migrants and people affected by forced adoption.

Lotus Place provides counselling, support and advocacy to this group of people and may be able to link your organisation to a mentor.

More information about Lotus Place can be found at www.culturaldiversity.com.au.

EveryAGE Counts

Negative attitudes and beliefs about ageing and older people underpin and drive age discrimination in places like the workplace or the healthcare system.

EveryAGE Counts is the opportunity to work with others in your community to create a society where every person is valued, connected and respected, regardless of age and health. More information can be found at www.everyagecounts.org.au

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland, a member of the COTA Federation, is a for purpose registered charity committed to advancing the rights, needs, interests, and futures of people as we age. We work with older people, community organisations, service providers, peak agencies, researchers, Governments at all levels, and the COTAs around Australia to inform, advocate, and influence.

COTA Queensland developed and trialled the Aged Care Mentoring program as part of the Australian Government funded Home Care Workforce Support Program.

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