



### Care at Home

I am excited that it is spring and it reminds me of the love my mother had for spring bulbs that my father would happily plant for her. After our loved ones have gone on, it is so special to have the comfort of wonderful memories. When we have the opportunity to spend time together, it is important to create moments to treasure, and to ensure those we love are well looked after.

The partners at Affinity Senior care have experience in caring for our loved ones through difficult times. This is why we understand that some days can be tough, how a person can be less resilient to situations that may seem minor. It may only be a small thing that is a tipping point, causing a day to become overwhelming and stressful. This is why we believe having good communication, services that are on time, and care from the same regular partner who can really get to know you matters. At Affinity Senior Care every client has a clinical partner who is a registered nurse. A clinical partner with a broad knowledge of health conditions and associated risks will help you during your in-home consultations, and personalise your support, services and care on your journey to optimal health and wellbeing.

Since our Winter newsletter there have been a few changes and the new Support at Home Program that the Department of Health and Ageing will be launching has now been deferred to June 2024. The good news is that many hardworking people are striving to implement the changes recommended by the Royal Commission into Aged Care, with a determination to widely consult, pilot, and create a significantly different system. The Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth) is being reviewed and the plan for aged care will have a greater emphasis on the services that consumer’s need, a system that is simpler to navigate and more transparent is planned. There is still an opportunity for a range of people including consumers to be involved in this process and if you would like more information on how to engage, please let us know.

While we wait for the reforms, did you know you can change your Care Provider, or that you can mix and match your services? In this era of consumer directed choice, you should be able to appoint your own Care Manager, your own personal carer, choose the allied health services your receive and so much more. Some Home Care Providers are not able to offer options to work with others in the community, and we believe it is important to ensure you are able to choose the care you wish to receive.

Apparently there are still a large number of Care Providers who still use paper-base processes. We are one of the few services that use digital technology to securely manage the care of our clients. This helps us to reduce errors, double handling and monitor the care and services we deliver. We want our clients and your families to have the confidence you are in safe hands, you are heard and understood. If you are interested in exploring a partnership with us, we offer free initial consultations in your home and you only have to call us on 3186 1325.

Renaë Armstrong

*Your wishes drive our goals*



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**CARE EXPO**  
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[CareExpoBrisbane.com.au](http://CareExpoBrisbane.com.au)

WE ARE PROUD TO BE EXHIBITING



Did you know the Hibiscus flower has culinary and medicinal applications?

## BENEFITS OF GARDENING

Gardening is one of the healthiest hobbies you can develop. Outdoor gardening can help your body fight disease. One of the ways is by exposing you to a key nutrient, vitamin D, which is essential for many purposes including strengthening your bones and your immune system. It is important to ensure this is safe for you and check your medications, as there are some medications which require you to avoid sunlight.

Gardening builds strength, promotes sleep, and helps you maintain a healthy weight. Studies have shown that people who garden are more likely to get a solid 7 hours sleep at night. It is not uncommon to wake up sore after a day in the garden so be careful to pace yourself.

Gardening can help protect your memory, is a mood booster and can calm you after stressful events. Studies have shown that people with depression improved after participating in a gardening intervention. Researchers noted that after exposing study participants to a stressful activity, a gardening group recovered from stress better than a reading group.

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*“Gardening adds years to your life and life to your years.” - unknown*

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*"I love walking because it clears your mind, enriches the soul, takes away stress, and opens up your eyes to a whole new world."* Claudette Dudley

## ARE YOUR BOOTS MADE FOR WALKING?

Research is not always surprising, however, the confirmation of the findings can be encouraging and help to motivate us.

A coronary artery study was conducted in which 2110 participants 38 to 50 years, wore an accelerometer, and were followed over a period of a mean of 10.8 years and the results analysed in 2020 and 2021. Daily steps volume were classified as: low < 7000 steps/day; moderate 7000-9999 steps/day; and high > 10000 steps/day.

Compared with the low step group, moderate/high step rate was associated with a reduced risk of mortality in women and men. There was no association of step intensity with mortality. The results showed that steps per day is a meaningful metric for physical activity promotion.

Being intentional about exercise and setting goals to achieve a level of fitness that can promote your health and wellbeing is one of the ways we enjoy working with clients to promote their health and wellbeing.

There are a number of walking groups in our local areas, and for those starting out there are easy paced options. It is a great way to socialise as you may wish to enjoy a tea or a coffee afterwards. If you would like someone to walk with, to build your confidence, we are happy to walk with you too!

## A PHYSIOTHERAPIST OR AN EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST?

A Physiotherapist or an Exercise Physiologist are not mutually exclusive, both work within a broad scope of practice, so it can be confusing.

Both professions:

- undertake 4 years of tertiary study covering subjects such as anatomy, physiology, cardiopulmonary function, nervous system function and biomechanics.
- are recognised by Medicare and private health funds
- are required to complete professional development each year to maintain accreditation

### Exercise Physiologist (EP)

EP studies includes injuries, conditions and the best exercises to treat. An EP will use graded, evidence-based movement and exercise interventions for musculoskeletal injuries and chronic disease prevention and management. An EP will also seek to understand each person's lifestyle and consider behaviour modification while investigating potential causation of an issue. The identification of contributing factors can help treat and prevent possible future reoccurrence.

### Physiotherapist (PT)

A PT degree only includes a smaller component of exercise prescription. A PT is a specialist in the area of treating an acute musculoskeletal disorder. They are known to use a variety of methods such as acupuncture, massage, ultrasound, joint mobilisation, manipulation, and rehab exercises. If you have suffered an injury and need your symptoms settles a PT may be a great choice.

Simply put, an exercise physiologist will assess and manage your condition with exercise, whereas a physiotherapist will assess, provide a diagnosis and treat your condition through a variety of hands-on skills, education and exercise.



## QUIZ

Being old and feeling old are two different things and exercise can stop you from slowing down, losing strength and energy.

How much do you know about exercise?

1. Aerobic exercise is the fastest way for seniors to lose weight.

True or False

2. Weight lifting isn't safe or effective for people in the 80s and 90s.

True or False

3. Which of the following exercises will NOT help build bone and prevent fractures?

- a. Swimming
- b. Weight lifting
- c. Tennis
- d. Walking
- e. Bicycling

4. Which of these activities can cut your risk of heart disease roughly in half?

- a. Regular walks
- b. Jogging
- c. Aerobic Classes
- d. All of the above
- e. None of the above

5. Which disease usually makes it impossible to engage in vigorous exercise?

- a. Arthritis
- b. Diabetes
- c. High blood pressure
- d. All of the above
- e. None of the above

Answers on page 8

## INCLUDEE—CONNECTING COMMUNITY

By Alicia Renfrew

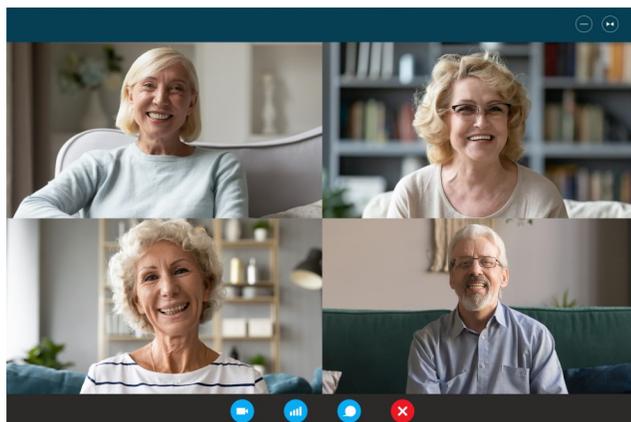
Loneliness is a growing epidemic impacting seniors across the country. 1 in 4 older Australians are lonely, which greatly impacts their physical health, mental health, and overall wellbeing. This is more likely to lead to depression, anxiety, and chronic illness. They are considered significant health and wellbeing issues in Australia because of the impact on peoples' lives.

Research suggests that loneliness is highly stigmatised. Those affected are reluctant to talk about their experiences of loneliness, as they worry it is a sign of personal weakness and how they will be judged by expressing their feelings. This makes identifying people at risk of loneliness and social isolation more challenging. As we are social creatures, humans have an innate need to belong to a group. We need to form meaningful connections with others. Loneliness may be a sign that a person's relationships are inadequate or don't meet their needs or expectations. Research has found that loneliness is related more to the *quality* of the relationships, rather than the *quantity*. A staggering 30% of Australians do not feel part of a group of friends. A person experiencing loneliness feels their relationships are not meaningful and they are not understood by others.

Loneliness is defined as a subjective state of negative feelings about having a lower level of social contact than desired (Peplau & Perlman 1982). It affects people from all walks of life. It's a feeling of distress when people do not experience social relationships in the ways they would like. It causes a feeling of social isolation, which is different to feeling alone. Social isolation is seen as the state of having minimal contact with others. Some definitions include loneliness as a form of social isolation (Hawthorne 2006) while others state that loneliness is an emotional reaction to social isolation (Heinrich & Gullone 2006). The two concepts do not necessarily co-exist, as a person may be socially isolated but not lonely, or socially connected but feel lonely (Australian Psychological Society 2018; Relationships Australia 2018).

At Includee, we know that isolation and loneliness is a huge problem for this community. We recognise the impact this has not only on seniors themselves, but also their caregivers. We are leaders in connection, positively enhancing the lives of Australians who are vulnerable to loneliness and isolation. Our organisation's foundation is based on our mission, which is to use the power of connection to relieve isolation and loneliness for Australians. We are a non-profit organisation that has been specialising in community connection for 49 years. Our Social Connection Programs are designed to socially connect seniors to volunteers, their peers, friends, family, and their greater community, using the power of digital technology.

We have built a community where everyone feels valued and comfortable to join in and connect on their terms. Our cutting-edge social connection programs improve the lives of others, engage our communities, and build happiness and



(Continued on page 5)

## INCLUDEE—CONNECTING COMMUNITY CONTINUED

confidence in our seniors and their care givers.

### Who are the programs for?

The Inculsee programs are open to seniors in specific aged care planning regions in Australia. Our simple technology and easy to join, specialised programs allow you to completely connect to the community. Whether it's connecting with individuals, groups, or family and friends, you can do it all at Inculsee.

Our programs are funded by various government grants including the Commonwealth Home Support Program and the Federal Community Visitors Scheme. They are completely free; however, some eligibility conditions apply. If you don't meet our funding criteria, we will always be happy to refer you to a similar service funded in your specific area.

### What programs are available?

Learn new skills, gain knowledge and confidence using technology with our supportive learning programs. Find enjoyment in discovering new interests, revisiting favourite activities, and coming together for special events. With a diverse range of specialised programs and activities delivered through our easy-to-use digital technology, we are a thriving community offering something for everyone. All you need to do is join in.

You can Connect2Friends, or Connect2One if you prefer to have a virtual visit all to yourself. Would you rather see a smiley face in person? You can join our Face2Face program, where you can share stories, memories, and experiences with your volunteer over your favourite cuppa.

Interested in learning digital skills? Our Learn2Tech program has been designed to teach you anything and everything about the digital landscape. All you need to do is choose your topic and join in with your very own, dedicated Digital Mentor.

We empower our community by providing the tools, support, and skills to give people the freedom to connect on their terms. Each participant is provided with a digital tablet that has been specially programmed with easy-to-use software and a mobile internet connection built into the device (via a SIM card). This enables each participant to access the Inculsee community, even if there is no internet connection at home.

Inculsee is a community where people can make new connections and revisit old ones, learn new skills, and find enjoyment in interests, activities, and events. Our goal is to increase inclusiveness and connection by creating a community that delivers experiences for participants and volunteers that are enjoyable. You can connect with Inculsee by calling 1800 287 687 or visiting us at [www.inculsee.org.au](http://www.inculsee.org.au).



## WARM WEATHER PREPARATION

As Spring is the precursor to Summer, it is a good time to prepare for any potential heatwaves that may be on the horizon.

Seniors are more at risk to the dehydrating effects of sun exposure. Do you have clothing, sunglasses, and a hat with a brim to hand?

Do you have drink containers that are suitable for taking with you on outings?

Have you done a walk through your home to check your windows and fans are in good order?

Do you have a cooling system that may need to be serviced to ensure it will be able to work effectively when you need it?

Are your medications properly stored? Many medications degrade if not kept at the right temperature.

If you enjoy going outside are your pathways, verandas and outdoor surfaces even and safe. If not, getting them fixed before the heat is a great idea.

Do you know when to stay inside and do you have some activities to hand that you will enjoy? The sun is strongest from 10 am to 4pm.

Do you know the symptoms of hyperthermia and what to do if you are feeling unwell?



## ENJOYING SPRING

Spring can be a funny season when some days the weather is perfect some days and on other days here in Queensland it can be quite hot. It is often a time when we can go outdoors more often with a multitude of benefits resulting from being in the fresh air, listening to birds, and being in the garden. It can also be a problem for people with allergies to grass and pollen, with a good allergy treatment as recommended by a doctor being beneficial.



### Tune Up

Stay running at peak performance! Rejuvenate your life and get your weight, blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol levels checked. When did you last have your eyes tested and is it time to schedule an appointment with your optometrist? If you haven't seen your dentist for at least six to nine months, consider making an appointment. If you are having difficulty hearing others when they are talking, especially in a crowd, consider having your hearing tested.

### Eat and Drink Well

The prices of healthy fruits and veggies are recovering, making it the perfect time to replace heavy winter meals with salads, light soups and cut down on processed foods.

Most seniors have a lessened ability to notice thirst, so it is important to keep an eye on your water intake, especially if exercising outdoors or gardening. Dehydration can adversely affect your memory, concentration, energy levels, and lead an increased risk of falls or other complications. If you are restricting your fluids because of continence concerns, please have a chat to our continence nurse.

### Exercise and Rest

Soaking up warm sunshine, walking in the outdoors and enjoying nature has great benefits when done safely. As our hours of daylight increase, remembering to rest and a consistent sleeping pattern will help you to enjoy life more.

## CHRONIC PAIN

One in 5 Australians aged 45 and over are living with persistent, ongoing pain. Chronic pain is often referred to as the invisible illness, as you may look well to others. When pain persists for three or more months it can impact a person's ability to work, move, sleep, enjoy social or family time and can cause emotional distress. Chronic pain is not "all in your head" and is a complex condition which can be caused by nerve pain, bone, muscle or a joint condition, as well as pain due to cancer. Acute pain can also become a chronic pain condition if left untreated. Sometimes there is no apparent cause of chronic pain. Under normal conditions, pain protects you and resolves with healing.



Nerves carry signals from the injured part of your body to the brain, reporting there is a problem. The brain reads these signals as pain. Pain persists when the nervous system is reprogrammed and pain signals become more frequent, amplified and are triggered without warning. Some people may experience an increase in pain if they sit for too long or move too much. People's pain can be triggered by the weather or for no apparent reason.

Physical pain is related to emotional pain, so chronic pain can increase your stress levels. Building emotional skills can help you cope. It is important to take good care of your body, continue taking part in your daily activities even though this may be extremely challenging, and seek support.

The goal of pain management is to enable you to take back your life, and return to meaningful, and enjoyable activities with pain being reduced. This can be achieved with a combination of strategies such as medications, movement, diet, relaxation, thinking strategies, and more. A multidisciplinary approach with the engagement of healthcare professionals who take time to understand you and your individual needs is recommended. However, not all healthcare providers understand chronic pain management.

If you have an issue with chronic pain there are a number of services you may find useful:

- National pain services directory
- APMA - Pain Link Helpline 1300
- Musculoskeletal Helpline 1800 263 265

The Australian Pain Management Association has a range of resources you may find helpful, including connecting with others either via an online or in-person support group.



## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. False

Most seniors can lose weight faster through strength training than through aerobic exercise, according to a report in *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*. Lifting weights helps replace fat with muscle and speeds up the metabolism. Muscle is denser than fat, so your weight can also stay the same or increase slightly as you gain muscle mass and burn fat.

2. False

A group of nursing home residents ranging in age from 87 to 96 improved their muscle strength by almost 180 percent after eight weeks of resistance training. Elderly people find that their balance improves, can walk faster and stairs are less challenging after age-appropriate strength training.

3. False

Swimming or biking are excellent for a workout, but they don't build bone. To ward off osteoporosis and prevent fractures, you need exercises in which you stay on your feet and support your own weight. Walking, jogging, dancing, tennis, and weight lifting are good choices for maintaining healthy bones.

4. All of the above

Exercise in moderation is effective. Researchers at Harvard found that women who walked just three hours a week cut their risk of heart disease by 40 percent.

5. None of the above

Regular exercise can be excellent therapy for all of these diseases and many others. It is important to check with your doctor before starting any high-intensity exercise program.

# Arthritis Friendly Activities for Spring

Information from Arthritis Queensland so you can enjoy Spring.

## Gardening

Pain, inflammation or fatigue associated with arthritis can make gardening difficult.

Tips to prevent strain and stress on your joints:

- Taking regular breaks on jobs in the yard
- Wear protective clothing like gloves and wrist splints.
- Use lightweight tools and an Occupational Therapist can advise on products and other ways to protect your joints.
- Use a garden stool or chair
- Build a low maintenance garden.



## Cooking

In order to make cooking a more pleasant experience you may wish to consider:

- Purchase high-quality tools and assistive devices that promote joint stability.
- Reorganising the kitchen and placing all essential and regularly-used items in easy-to-reach shelves and cabinets to avoid the amount of times you need to bend over.
- Purchase pre-cut or frozen vegetables to avoid chopping as often, as well as buying prepackaged meals for your off days or occasions when you don't want to put any additional strain on your joints. You can also try meal prepping for the whole week and freezing portions to save for a later date.

## Arts, Craft and Knitting

Repetitive actions involved in knitting and art activities can not only reduce joint pain and stiffness but also increase flexibility of joints and improve muscle strength.

Participating in art and craft activities is also a great way to ease stress and arthritis pain, and slow down the progress of degenerative arthritis conditions.

## Knitting

- Make sure to stretch your hands beforehand to avoid cramps and pain and engage in knitting in short intervals to reduce joint pain and tiredness.
- Use light-wight needles such as plastic, casein or bamboo needles, as they are easier on the hands compared to metal needles.
- Stick to wool as it is more flexible and elastic which also makes it easier to work with.

## Sculpting and Pottery

- Use softer clay as it will be easier to work and cause less joint pain. Try to keep your wrists in a natural position.

## Colour, paint, sketch or make a collage

- Art activities like sketching and colouring not only have the physical benefits of keeping your joints moving, they also promote mindfulness and reduce depression and anxiety. Make sure to take breaks and use wrist rests where needed and consider buying stationary and brushes that provide additional grip and support.

## Exercise

Exercise is also very important when dealing with arthritis-related joint pain and muscle stiffness.

It is important to remain active. You may like to consider hydrotherapy, walking and cycling, and strength training. An Exercise Physiologist can tailor a program that is personalised for you.



## EXHIBITION TIPS

There are a lot of services available to assist people staying in their own home. Exhibitions are extremely helpful to explore and discover solutions, services, products and equipment that are available.

In order to get the best from visiting an exhibition these are our top tips:

1. **Identify a target list:** In advance of an event, make sure you visit the exhibition website and select the key businesses and people you'd like to speak to. Note down their stand numbers and map a route for yourself to find them.
2. **Get some free advice:** exhibitions offer an opportunity to learn from the best. If you are just starting out on your aged care journey, ask for advice and attend some of the speaking events that will be held.
3. **Network:** think of the event as a big networking arena. Prepare your questions in advance. You never know who you will meet and who can help!
4. **Get motivated:** by talking to people you can find out how to be successful in your aged care journey.
5. **Take Breaks:** don't forget to recharge your batteries.

Make sure you visit Affinity Senior Care!

## DICKSON SENIORS EXPO

We were there and loved meeting people from our community. It was a great opportunity to meet others from the industry as well.

We are already looking forward to next year!



## A BIT OF FUN!

A house is not a home until there's an elephant in the room, a skeleton in the closet, a bogeyman under the bed, and a bun in the oven.

What did the owl say when the man asked him to address the elephant in the room? .....

Who?

Why did the elephant get kicked out of the swimming pool? .....

His trunks kept falling down!

There were two elephants under one umbrella, why didn't they get wet?.....

It wasn't raining.

Why was the elephant afraid of the computer store? .....

They sold the world's best mice.

## CARE EXPO

We will be at the Care Expo, **near the coffee cart, P21**, and hope to see you.

We will be giving away special gifts to anyone who comes along and tells us that they read our newsletter and saw our Elephant in the room!





## AFFINITY SENIOR CARE



Care Management  
Clinical Care  
Nursing Care  
Health Monitoring  
Continence Management  
Dementia Care  
Palliative Care  
Wound Care  
Personal Care  
Meal Preparation  
Social Outings and Support  
Respite Care  
Companionship  
Gardening  
Pet Care  
Cleaning  
Laundry  
Transport  
Digital Health Technology  
Safety systems  
Assistive Technology  
Allied Health Services

## PARTNER WITH US!

We bring high-quality care to your front door!

Choosing to invite someone into your home to provide you with care, services and support is an important decision and paramount to ensuring you can live independently on your own terms.

A nurse-led innovative service personalised to your unique needs, optimising your health and well-being.

- Create your own *Circle of Care*
- Regular visits from partners who can really get to know you
- Technology, apps, email, face-to-face, and phone-calls
- A range of solutions and options
- Short or long-term, simple or complex care, services and support
- Motivated to provide care we would like our own families to receive
- No hidden fees or charges
- Respecting your choices

## FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION

If you would like to know more about the services and support that we provide we would love to hear from you.

## Affinity Senior Care

*Your wishes drive our goals!*

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