

About the LGBTI and Dementia Guide

In March 2021 Dementia Support Australia partnered with LGBTIQ+ Health Australia to improve support for LGBTIQ+ people with dementia, following recent recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. The Royal Commission formally identified that many LGBTIQ+ older peoples' needs were not met by the current aged care system. Dementia Support Australia has always strived to provide individualised and tailored services for marginalised communities including First Nations people, children, and those in rural and remote locations, in addition to LGBTIQ+ communities.

The co-authored LGBTI and Dementia guide is one of many resources aimed at improving equitable outcomes for this demographic. Developed for aged care staff, who are as diverse as the people they serve, it aims to provide an understanding of the issues people from LGBTIQ+ communities may have faced at different times in their lives and how this may impact on changes in behaviour if the person develops dementia.

The booklet provides guidance on the use of language and its effects on LGBTIQ+ people and communities.

“It’s important to be aware of how people talk about themselves and to ask how they prefer to be referred to. Using the correct terms and pronouns is affirming and avoids bringing back unpleasant memories or creating uncomfortable situations. Terms may not be the same in every situation and may depend on whether the person is in a private or public setting”. - LGBTI and Dementia - Understanding changes in behaviour, page 18

The guide explains that for people from LGBTIQ+ communities dementia adds an extra complicating factor.

“The person may be unable to express their needs and wishes and therefore may not receive the individualised care that affirms them as an LGBTI person. It is therefore important that LGBTI people living with dementia are adequately supported around their sexuality, gender and bodily diversity with respect and dignity.” - LGBTI and Dementia - Understanding changes in behaviour, page 13

People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds and First Nations people can experience added trauma or stress due to discrimination from both racism and in relation to their sexuality, gender identity or intersex variation, the guide says.

The booklet and help sheets (Supporting sexuality and intimacy for LGBTI people with dementia; Understanding the impact of trauma and stress for LGBTI people with dementia) are available online at the [Dementia Support Australia Resource Library](#) and in hard copy in HammondCare facilities across Australia and at LHA's Silver Rainbow network of aged care partners.

Dementia Support Australia

Dementia Support Australia (DSA) is a service led by HammondCare that brings together expertise in dementia care from across the aged care industry. DSA provides a three-level nationwide support service based on the needs of the person with dementia who is impacted by behaviours and psychological symptoms of dementia: a Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service, Severe Behaviour Response Teams, and a Needs Based Assessment Program for the Specialist Dementia Care Program (SDCP). DSA also provides a variety of resources to both inform and assist health care professionals and family members who are supporting a person living with dementia, including booklets, videos and webinars. HammondCare is an independent Christian charity providing health, palliative care, dementia and aged care services. Regarded nationally and internationally as one of Australia's most innovative health and aged care providers, HammondCare offers hospital care, residential care and community services.

LGBTIQ+ Health Australia

LGBTIQ+ Health Australia (LHA) is the national peak health organisation in Australia for organisations and individuals that provide health-related programs, services and research focused on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people and other sexuality and gender diverse (LGBTIQ+) people and communities. LHA provides high-quality information, education, social marketing, and resources about LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing, including on emerging issues and needs. LHA develops and contributes to research and policy development, assisting and advising the government, as well as analysing data to track issues in communities and advocating action, communicating these findings to the community, government and various funding agencies. LHA also works extensively to build the capacity of mainstream organisations to improve LGBTIQ+ health, and supports member organisations with toolkits, policy templates, webinars, and other resources.

Biographies:

Dementia Support Australia **Head of Dementia Centre Services: Marie Alford (She/Her)**

Marie Alford has a background in social work, community services, leadership, advocacy, training and management. She is the strategic lead for Dementia Support Australia, a program led by HammondCare, delivering the National Severe Behaviour Response Teams, the national Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service and the new Needs Based Assessment Program for determining eligibility for Specialist Dementia Care Programs. Marie's work also includes the development of stakeholder and special needs groups strategies for DSA and implementation programs such as HammondCare's International Dementia Programs. Prior to joining HammondCare, she was the Director of the South Australian and Northern Territory Dementia Training Study Centre, and General Manager of Alzheimer's South Australia.

LGBTIQ+ Health Australia **Director – Training and Capacity Building: Robert Hardy (He/Him)**

Robert Hardy joined LGBTIQ+ Health Australia in July 2021. He has 15 years' experience working in health promotion and training management roles. Robert originally trained as an occupational therapist and has worked in acute, rehabilitation and community settings in the areas of aged care, people living with HIV, brain injury, and intellectual and physical disabilities. Robert has extensive experience working in the public, private and non-government sectors including international programs in the Pacific. Robert is passionate about the rights of older people and people with disability by developing innovative programs to address health inequity through advocacy, partnership development and capacity building.