

Thinking about a break?

An information kit for carers
on Residential Respite



Respite
Connections

Produced by
Carers Victoria Respite Connections

Updated July 2011

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**free call except from mobile phones*

An Australian Government initiative



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Introduction

In recent years the number of elderly people living at home in the community has grown. People now live considerably longer than in the past and of course, most people want to live at home for as long as possible.

The Australian government and state governments provide funding for packages of support to enable frail aged people to live in the community longer before going to residential care. This is a welcome trend to many people, but it does have an impact on the lives of family and friends who take on the responsibilities of caring. Caring can be extremely rewarding but can also be very demanding, leaving carers with little time for themselves and their own interests.

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres are located throughout Australia to support and assist carers in the community. In our work to support carers, we encourage you to take the time to consider your own needs, and to accept the opportunity for a regular break or respite from the caring role. Carers often tell us about the positive effects they feel, once they get into a pattern of using regular respite and can make plans to do some things for themselves.

Residential respite, where the person you care for goes into an aged care home for a limited period of time, provides you with a break from your caring role to do things you like to do, with the option of visiting your family member when you wish.

The aim of this kit is to provide you with an understanding of how to access residential respite, and how to plan and prepare for it so that the respite experience is a positive one for you, the person you are caring for and the aged care home. This kit has been created by the Centre in the Western metropolitan region of Melbourne known as Carers Victoria Respite Connections. It is primarily for carers in the west, but contains much useful information about respite that applies nationwide.

If you live in Melbourne's Western region and would like to talk to someone about residential respite or other supports for carers please contact us on 9396 9550.

Alternatively you may contact Aged Care Information on 1800 200 422, a toll free number which can provide a link to a wide range of community, aged care and support services that are available locally and nationally.



Respite helps you find the balance

What types of respite are there?

Respite can take several forms. The most common types are:

- In-home respite - a paid worker comes to the home for a short period to allow you to do something else
- Day respite - the person you care for goes to an aged care facility for the day`
- Respite house - the person stays for several nights in a specially set-up house with care staff in the community
- Residential respite - the person goes to stay in an aged care home, usually for two weeks.

Our service can help you with further information about all kinds of respite, but the focus of this kit is on Residential Respite.

The benefits of a longer break*

Residential respite can give carers a long break from their caring responsibilities. Some but not all residential care homes offer this – usually in blocks of two weeks or more, although some aged care homes offer overnight or weekend respite too. All care is provided, including meals and activities.



Carers say that residential respite has the following benefits:

- Gives you a longer break
- Offers you another source of support, from facility staff
- Helps you and your family member get to know the staff and learn what to expect from residential care
- Challenges your views on residential care, which can make you feel better
- Helps your family member become familiar with residential care, the routines and the environment
- Can help you and your family member adjust to eventual separation
- Helps in identifying the 'right' facility for the future
- Assists carers and their families with their decision making

*"I hated the thought of using residential respite.
But my worker was right –
it helps me keep on caring for Joe."*

* Carers Victoria. "Why consider respite in a residential care facility?" Victoria, Series 3, Sheet 10, *Surviving the Maze* (www.survivingthemaze.org.au)

Expect feelings of hesitation

It's natural to feel uncomfortable using residential respite, especially if it's for the first time. Leaving the person you care for in the care of someone else can be extremely difficult. This can be even harder if your family member is unable to communicate their needs, as with those who have dementia or have English as a second language.

Some of your feelings may include relief, anxiety, loss or guilt. These feelings are normal; however they can limit your ability to have a much-needed break from your caring role.

- I feel that it is my duty to care for her / him
- I feel I'm breaking a promise to him / her
- I would feel guilty if I was having a good time while she / he is in there
- I thought that I would be able to do it all on my own
- Other family members will be upset and disapprove of me for using help outside the family
- I feel overwhelmed by what I saw at the facility

... No-one can provide the care like I can

- I have lived with him / her for most of my life I know exactly what needs to be done
- I have heard negative things about aged care homes, I worry about the quality of the care

Exaggerated reports by the media can make people feel vulnerable. The reality is that media reports are usually worst possible cases.

Nobody can replace the quality of care that you provide for the person at home. Aged care homes cannot provide the one to one care that you do.

Respite is only for a short period of time. The best thing you can do is to provide the aged care home with as much information as you can about the person's routines, preferences and requirements.

... I'm pushing him / her into going to respite

- I have talked to him about respite but he just does not want to go
- She makes me feel guilty for wanting to take a break
- I don't need the conflict that the respite would cause

There are several ways you could encourage the person to use residential respite. It may be that he / she is afraid of the unknown. Perhaps a visit to the aged care home together, before the respite stay will help to address this concern. Some aged care homes offer day respite so the person may be able to experience some day time at the aged care home before the block respite booking. This allows both of you to become more comfortable and familiar with the aged care facility before residential respite takes place.



Another suggestion is to consider using a short stay of several nights in a community respite house, as an introduction to residential respite.

It may also be useful to explain to the person that you are not abandoning them and that it is only a 'short holiday' for both of you. The most important thing is that the person understands that this is a short break and he / she will be coming home again.

These are only some suggestions - you know the person best. The person needs to be encouraged to accept that you, the carer, also have needs for a break. It also can help for the person to hear this from your doctor.



What do I need to know about aged care homes?

Residential respite care takes place in aged care homes or supported residential services.

Good residential care:

- Provides for the person's needs
- Respects the person's individuality
- Promotes the person's independence
- Provides a supportive environment for the person and their family and friends
- Invites comments from the residents, their families and where appropriate, their friends regarding the care and services they receive
- Uses up to date care practices to support residents
- Has an ongoing education program for their staff

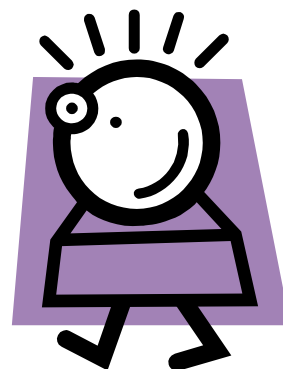
There are two levels of care provided by aged care homes:

1. Nursing home - high level of care needs
2. Hostel - low level of care needs

Both hostels and nursing homes receive government subsidies to provide residential care. In order to qualify for the subsidies, the aged care homes must meet certain accreditation standards. Whether a person is staying in an aged care home as a permanent resident or for respite care, they each have the same rights to the care and services of the aged care home.

Is there one staff member for every resident?

People sometimes have the impression that there is a staff member available to respond immediately to every request – this is not the case. It is difficult for staff to respond immediately to requests because of the number of residents each staff member has to attend to. It may take a little while before a bell can be answered.



Are all the staff nurses?

No, not all the staff members are nurses. Legislation requires aged care homes to provide an adequate number of appropriately skilled staff to ensure the care needs of residents are met. Staff usually comprise of a mix of registered nurses and trained personal care workers.

Will the resident's privacy be respected?

Staff are very aware of residents' right to privacy, however many facilities have a considerable proportion of people with advanced dementia. Often these people are quite confused and disorientated. As part of the illness, some may be intrusive and wander into the rooms of other residents. This is not an intended action to annoy others but behaviour associated with the condition. Some facilities do have a separate section for people with dementia. This can work positively both for those with dementia and for those residents who are cognitively well.

What if other residents in the facility call out?

A symptom of advanced stage of dementia can be that the person will call out. Staff members are likely to have attended to the person's needs but often this does not stop the behaviour.

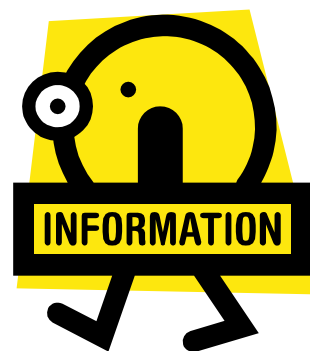
Does the environment reflect the quality of care?

The physical appearance, layout and décor of aged care homes vary considerably, with many older homes offering shared rooms and shared bathrooms. Newer aged care homes generally provide each resident with a single room and an ensuite. The décor may be immaculate but one should be careful about assuming that the décor indicates a standard of care. Older facilities may provide excellent care, however may be overlooked due to the physical appearance of the building. In viewing each facility it is important to keep in mind whether the person will be well cared for, will be welcomed to participate in activities and will feel as comfortable as possible.

What do I need to know about respite care?

Who Assesses The Level of Care Required?

Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS) are responsible for assessing whether a person needs high level or low level care. ACAS teams are made up of various health professionals who do comprehensive assessments of elderly people, usually in their homes. A worker will visit, assess, prepare paperwork and refer you to other support services, as required and agreed. The worker will give you a list of aged care homes that offer residential respite. This is a free service.



An ACAS worker must do an assessment before respite can be arranged. The ACAS member will fill out paperwork called the Aged Care Client Record. You will be given a copy of this paperwork to keep. You will need to show it to the aged care home where you are arranging the respite, so they can determine if they can meet the care needs.

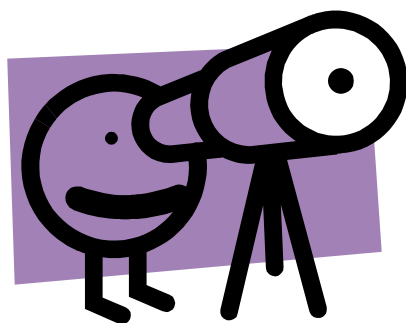
How do I contact the ACAS?

If you live in the local council areas of Melbourne, or Moonee Valley, contact the North West ACAS in Parkville, on 8387 2129.

If you live in the local council areas of Wyndham, Hobson's Bay, Melton, Brimbank or Maribyrnong, contact the Western ACAS in Sunshine, on 8345 1246.

If you live elsewhere in Australia, contact the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 200 422 for details of your nearest ACAS.

You may wish to contact ACAS yourself, or you can ask a family member, a friend or your doctor to ring on your behalf.



How do I find the respite care?

Once the ACAS assessment has been done, and you have a copy of the paperwork, you will be clear about whether you need to look for hostel (low care) or nursing home (high level) respite.

You will have information from ACAS about aged care homes to consider. You may also have some recommendations from friends or family members. Of course you can ring our service, on 9396 9550 to find out about respite vacancies, and if you have access to the Internet you can also find respite vacancies at www.respiteseeker.com.au

It is important to visit the aged care homes that interest you so you can see them for yourself and ask questions.

It is best to ring the aged care home for an appointment. A staff member can then spend time with you. Some aged care homes will have set times for a group tour. Some of the things to look for could be: what is your first impression, are staff friendly and answering the questions that you ask, are there interesting activities for the residents, does the environment appear comfortable. See the Appendix for a suggested list of questions you may wish to ask.

Waiting periods for respite

Booking respite at short notice can be difficult, so planning is very important.

Not all aged care facilities offer respite and there is a lot of demand for respite vacancies. If possible, plan and book respite several months in advance, particularly for holiday periods. Making several respite bookings ahead for the full year may be a way of avoiding disappointment. Cancellations or changes can be made later, but if you do need to change or cancel a respite booking, the aged care home needs to know as early as possible.

Emergency respite usually occurs when the carer has an accident or suddenly takes ill. It can be difficult to find emergency respite and we are often contacted to provide assistance in these circumstances.

Medication / Doctor's Consultation

Aged care homes have different procedures about the involvement of the doctor during the respite stay and the way medication will be administered. Some homes require that the person's own doctor visits the respite resident on admission. It is usually preferred that the family doctor is able to come and visit the facility if the need arises, so you will need to check this with your doctor. If it is not possible for the family doctor to visit, most aged care homes will use a locum service to obtain a doctor if required.

All aged care homes require a medication chart to be filled out by the person's own doctor close to the respite date. You will need to take the person's medications with you for the respite. Check if you are required to bring the medications in original packaging or in a dispensing pack prepared by a pharmacist.

Respite is not a treatment-based experience. There will not be any medical testing or implementation of new treatments during respite. The facility will only continue the medical procedures they agree to undertake prior to the respite admission.

But my family member has dementia

Depending on the type of dementia your family member has, it may be necessary to book respite in a facility that has specialised expertise. This will be discussed when the ACAS member visits, and suitable aged care homes will be suggested. This is usually required if the person wanders, tries to leave the premises or displays behaviour that requires a specialised environment or staff training. There is usually a great demand for these respite places because there are fewer options; therefore it is better to make a booking well in advance.

What does it cost?

The standard cost of using respite care is 85% of the full age pension for either high or low level care. At the time of printing this kit, the cost is approximately \$43 per day. There is no bond to be paid for respite care, but some aged care homes will charge a booking fee that will come off your total bill for the respite.



What happens to my Carer Payment or Age Pension during respite?

A carer can have up to 63 days per CALENDAR year for residential respite without it affecting their Carer Payment or Carer Allowance from Centrelink. The Age Pension is not affected by the amount of respite taken.

How long will she / he be in respite?



Residential respite is usually booked for a minimum of two weeks. Families who use respite say they benefit by accessing respite several times a year on a regular basis - for instance, a two-week respite stay, every three months.

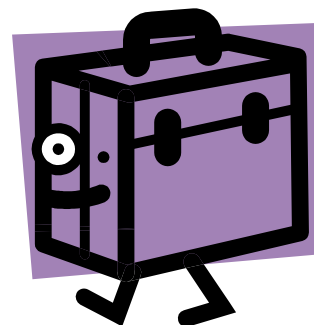
The person can use up to 63 days of Commonwealth government subsidised residential respite in a FINANCIAL year. If more than 63 days residential respite is needed, you will need to discuss this with an ACAS worker who can prepare paperwork to allow for an extension, where appropriate.

Will she / he have her own room?

All aged care homes have different layouts, which may affect where your family member will have his / her room. Some have shared respite rooms with a shared bathroom; others will have a single room with an ensuite. Depending on the size of the aged care home, the respite room may be located some distance away from the dining and entertaining areas. If your family member has difficulty with walking these are issues that need to be considered before respite commences.

What do I pack?

The amount of clothing needed will depend on how long the person is going in for respite. It is recommended that you pack comfortable, practical clothing. The aged care home will usually provide a list of suggested items. (See Appendix for a basic list)



Who does the clothes washing?

Clothes washing is generally done at the aged care home. Since they deal with a large quantity of washing, occasionally items may be misplaced. It is very important to make sure all clothing items are clearly labelled. (See appendix). It is recommended that delicate or woollen garments which you would normally hand wash are not packed for respite. You may take items home for washing if you choose.

Will the facility maintain the routines that we have at home?

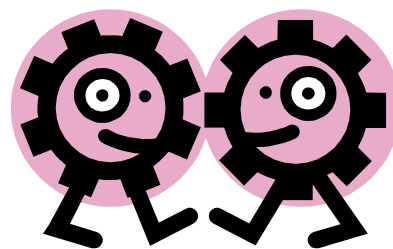
A care plan is a summary of all the day-to-day needs and tasks to be undertaken by the staff in caring for the person. As the primary carer, you know best about the individual requirements and preferences of the person, therefore you should request to be involved in writing the care plan developed by the facility for the respite period. This will allow you to explain about the person's usual routines and any strategies you use to assist the person at home, or to settle and reassure them.

How will he / she cope with being in a new place?

The first few days can be unsettling for the person and therefore they may behave in ways you would not expect at home. The environment is unfamiliar and it will take time to adjust. This may make you feel guilty or anxious. Speak to the care co-ordinator or your contact person at the facility about strategies you and the staff can put in place to reduce some of the stress you are both experiencing.

Can I visit?

You will probably be given a lot of advice about whether to visit the person while they are in respite and how often. Some may suggest that you don't visit as this is a break for you, others will suggest that you come as often as you feel you need to.



The decision that you make about how often to visit needs to be based on your own feelings and needs and your interpretation of what support the person needs.

What happens to usual services while she / he is in respite?

If the person has a case manager you will need to let them know the person will be in respite care. You or the case manager will need to suspend all the usual services such as meals on wheels, home care, showering, nursing care, and day centre and let them know the date when you wish the services to start again.



What about transport to and from the aged care home?

Aged care homes do not provide transport for respite. If necessary, please discuss the option of a non-urgent ambulance transfer with your doctor – these transfers need to be booked in advance. Should you still have difficulty, please ring our service to discuss possible supports.

What if I am not happy with the care?

The experience of using residential respite should be a good one for both yourself and the person you normally care for. If you are not happy with any aspect of the care provided you could discuss your concern with the appropriate staff member. All aged care homes are required to have a complaints process or an avenue to provide suggestions. You will need to ask the manager about what the process is.

If you have taken steps to discuss your issue and feel that it has not been dealt with you can contact Elder Rights Advocacy, 1800 700 600.

What do I need to know when I bring her / him home?

When the person is coming home, you should be given a verbal or written summary of the respite stay. This will include information about any changes in care needs, medication or

behaviour. It is also an opportunity to discuss strategies to deal with potential difficulties and what you may be able to expect when the person comes home.



As respite is coming to an end, check with staff:

- Has there been any change in his / her routines, health or behaviour since respite commenced that I should know about?
- Has there been any change in medication?
- Can I make the next respite booking now?
- If I wish to make comments about the respite stay who do I contact?
- Settling back at home could take a bit of time.

It may take some time to settle back at home after respite, especially if the person has dementia. Returning home can cause some confusion because the person may have got used to the staff, their room at the facility and where to find their items. Since the person has been in a different environment, it may take a little time to settle back into their home surroundings and their usual routines.

The challenges of using residential respite*

Of course there are challenges in using residential respite – and sometimes it can feel as though they outweigh the benefits.

Carers manage these challenges in different ways, but usually feel more rested and able to deal with their caring role after a respite stay. It's important to know that information, advice, strategies and support is available to help you find ways around these difficulties.

Contact:

- Our service on 9396 9550 – speak to the Aged Intake worker
- The person in charge at the residential care facility
- Your family's doctor

If regular residential respite becomes a pattern in the life of the person you care for, it will be much less traumatic for him or her if you cannot continue to provide the care – either temporarily or in the long term.

Carers who have used residential respite offer the following advice:*

- Expect that it may take some time to begin to enjoy the respite
- Expect the house to seem quiet and perhaps lonely
- Plan something for when you imagine will be the loneliest time (e.g. eat dinner with a friend or phone someone afterwards).
- Talk to someone who will understand how you feel
- Sleep as needed, day or night, to feel refreshed
- Plan some outings or go away for a complete break
- Organise other family members or friends to share the visiting

Remember that you are doing this to help you continue caring

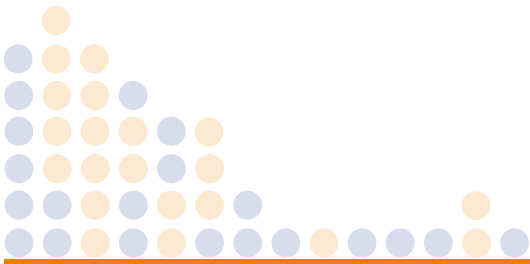
“I feel relieved and less stressed”

“I have time for me and my family”

“I feel that I can be patient with him / her again”



* Carers Victoria. “Why consider respite in a residential care facility?” Victoria, Series 3, Sheet 10, *Surviving the Maze* (www.survivingthemaze.org.au)



Respite Seeker

www.respiteseeker.com.au

Respite Seeker is an online tool that provides a comprehensive list of respite facilities and services in Victoria.

Easy access to services

Respite Seeker is designed to provide access to current respite information and to streamline searching and booking respite.

Our new website will help people to find respite services such as day centres, outing groups and aged care homes. It will assist residential and community respite providers to list and manage their respite vacancies and bookings.

Who is it for?

- Case Managers and other service providers who assist clients to locate respite options
- Carers and those with care needs who want to arrange their own respite
- Aged Care homes who offer residential respite
- Service providers who offer in home, day centre, overnight and other respite options.

How does it work?

Respite Seeker makes searching for vacancies easy! It allows you to target your search in several ways. Search either by region, suburb, respite type or facility name, or by date and other criteria. Respite Seeker will produce a list of available services that match your search.

What are the benefits?

Looking for respite:

- A simple search to provide a list of local respite options
- Information about respite vacancies
- Search results can be easily printed
- Simple access to contact information

Offering respite:

- A free, password protected respite booking system
- Respite vacancies advertised live to a wide audience
- Simple to update and maintain
- User manual available and updated on website

Contact us:

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre

Freecall **1800 052 222***

*Calls from mobiles are charged at applicable rates.



Appendix

Suggested questions to ask at the aged care home

It is important to ask questions when you first visit the aged care home, so that you feel well prepared for the respite stay. You know your family member best, so rely on your intuition and common sense; however, this list of questions can be used as a guide to help you gain the information you need. And remember – first impressions are very important!



- How can our cultural / language needs be met here?
- Will my family member have a single or shared room?
- How far is the respite room from the lounge and dining areas?
- Will the room be in a secure section of the facility? (for a person who has dementia)
- Can we bring personal items from home to make the room more familiar?
- Who do I speak to if I want to know how the respite is going? When is the best time to contact that person?
- What can I expect from some of the other residents? Are there difficult behaviours or intrusive behaviours that I should be aware of?
- What activities are organised during the day for the person in respite?
- What is the procedure for clothes washing?
- What is the daily fee?
- Will there be any additional costs to the daily fee?
- How can I be involved in developing the care plan? (Care Plan - information about your family member's day to day care and requirements)
- What can my involvement be with daily care and activities? (If you would like to be part of some of the care, it is best to establish how this would work from the beginning).
- How does the facility require information about medication to be provided eg medication chart or a letter from the doctor?
- Do I need to provide the medication? How? Should I bring it in a Webster style pack or in the original packets?
- Does the family doctor need to be involved in the respite admission?
- What do I need to bring?
- What will happen if my family member gets sick or there is an incident while in respite? Will I be contacted?
- Who do I speak to if I have suggestions or concerns?

Residential respite details

(Complete this and keep it handy)

Name of facility

phone number

respite contact person.....

times the person can be contacted.....

start & finish dates of respite stay

Personal requirements for respite care

All clothing and personal items must be clearly, but discreetly labelled with the resident's name. Any additional clothing brought in during the stay is to be recorded and labelled.

Please bring at least:

- 3 pair of pyjamas or nightwear
- 3 sets of underwear
- 3 changes of clothes
- 1 pair of slippers
- 1 pair of street shoes
- 1 dressing gown
- toiletries
- aids or appliances

All of these items will be returned on discharge.

Laundry will be carried out by the aged care home unless you make other arrangements.

Also:

- Medicare card
- Pension Card
- Department of Veterans Affairs card if applicable
- All current medications in original packaging, or Webster type pack, as required by the facility and prescriptions
- Medication chart completed by your doctor

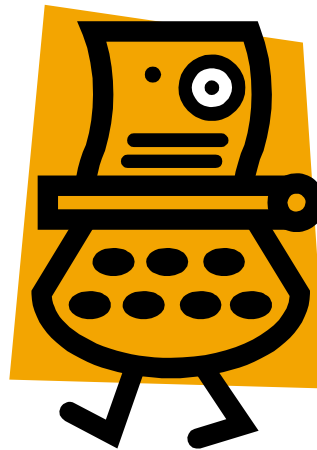
If the resident is unable to manage money, amounts over \$10.00 may usually be left at the office and receipts issued as required.

Labelling of clothes

Aged care homes require all clothing items to be labelled. This is very important, to help prevent clothing being lost. Some aged care homes provide this service for you, but if not, here are some suggested services you may wish to use. They will create personalised clothing labels, posted to you. (Costs as quoted were correct at time of printing).

Cash's Australia Pty Ltd
10 Rocklea Drive
Port Melbourne
Ph: 1800 020 204
www.nametapes.com.au

Kwik Tapes
2 Reeves Court
Kew 3101
Ph: 9855 1337
www.kwiktapes.com.au



Summary of action steps – A quick reference



- Does the person have an ACAS assessment that is ticked for respite?
Yes No (contact ACAS and arrange for an assessment to be done)
- Find out about aged care homes that offer respite care and you think may be suitable.
We can help you with this information - call our service on 9396 9550. If you have a case manager, he or she will also be able to help.
- List several aged care homes that interest you, make an appointment and visit – ask questions. Take a copy of the ACAS assessment with you.
- Consider the options and what will best suit you and the person you care for. Make a respite booking.
- Fill out any paperwork required by the aged care home.
- Visit your doctor and ask him / her to complete a medication chart and any prescriptions that may be needed.
- Label all clothing.
- Pack appropriate clothing and personal items to give the respite room a familiar touch e.g. photos, books, bedspread or a cushion.
- Suspend any council services or district nursing services for the respite period.
- Arrange transport to the aged care home.
- Visit as often or as little as you decide is appropriate.
- Use the respite time to do whatever you choose!
- Plan and book further respite – perhaps two or three bookings at regular intervals.

Remember – our service is here to help you with respite – please feel welcome to ring us, on 9396 9550.

Glossary of terms

ACAS – Aged Care Assessment Services:

An aged care assessment service is a team of health professionals who aim to assist people to make appropriate decisions about a person's care needs. They will generally visit you and the person you care for at home. They can also provide information about particular aged care facilities so you can choose an appropriate one for either permanent care or respite care.

APATT - Aged Psychiatry Assessment and Treatment Team:

Provides services, support and referrals to carers and aged persons experiencing mental health issues.

Aged Care Client Record:

This is the assessment form that ACAS completes. Also called a 3020. It indicates whether your family member requires low or high level care. It is required in order to use the residential aged care system for respite or permanent care and also to be wait listed for community packages of support, if appropriate.

ACF or ACH - Aged Care Facility, Aged Care Home:

These terms are often used interchangeably. Both refer to Hostels and Nursing Homes.

Day Respite:

Some Aged Care Facilities offer day respite. This allows a person to stay during the day, and take part in the activities, meals and daily routine. Day respite can be a valuable support for working carers who are juggling work and caring responsibilities, or for family carers who need longer hours of respite than can be provided in other ways. There is a cost for this service, which is set by the Aged Care Facility. We can provide details of Aged Care Homes that offer day respite and may be able to assist with costs in some circumstances.

Director of Nursing (DON):

This person is also often known as the manager. This is the person who is in charge of the overall clinical care of the residents and often the daily running of the Aged Care Home.

Home and Community Care (HACC):

Local council usually provides HACC services aimed at assisting and supporting older people in the community to live healthy and independent lives in their own homes.

Councils usually provide the following HACC services:

- Home Care- Assists with home cleaning, shopping, and house maintenance.
- Food Services (Meals on Wheels) - Meals delivered to your house.
- Social Support- Activities and clubs that provides support and outings, i.e. PAG / day centres
- Respite services- Provides carers of older people with a break from their caring role, i.e. in-home.

Hostels:

Aged Care Homes that provide care for people who have been assessed as needing a low level of care.

Nursing Home:

Aged Care Homes that provide care for people who have been assessed as needing a high level of care.

PAC – Post Acute Care:

The post acute care program provides short-term help with in-home services to people when they return home from a public hospital or a public emergency department and need help that is beyond what family or community services can provide.

PAG - Planned Activity Groups:

Planned Activity Groups are programs that enable frail aged individuals to spend time together involved in activities. The program usually takes place at a venue within the local council area. To take part in PAG programs you will need to contact your local council.

Permanent Care:

The term used when a person is admitted into an Aged Care Home to live there permanently.

Respite:

The term respite means having a break from your caring role.

Supported Residential Service (SRS):

A private business providing residential care and support. They do not receive government funding, and therefore, people do not need to be assessed by ACAS to stay in them. The cost of respite care is usually considerably higher than for aged care homes.

Generally these services can provide care for people with minimal care needs.



Useful contacts

Aged Care Assessment Service

If you live in the local council areas of Melbourne, or Moonee Valley, contact the North West ACAS in Parkville, on 8387 2129.

If you live in the local council areas of Wyndham, Hobson's Bay, Melton, Brimbank or Maribyrnong, contact the Western ACAS in Sunshine on 8345 1246



Aged Care Information

This number can provide a link to a wide range of community, aged care and support services that are available locally and nationally. The experienced workers who answer the phone can provide you with free and confidential information on:

- community aged care services to help you stay safely in your home
 - these may include domestic assistance, home maintenance and modification, personal care, delivered meals and nursing care – you can also find out about these services using the Community Services Finder on this site
- your local Aged Care Assessment Team
 - to access most government-funded aged care you first have to be assessed by health professionals called Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs) – you can also get contact details for your nearest ACAT using the ACAT Finder on this site
- carer support and respite services
 - these services help carers with options to take a break through short-term and emergency respite (based on assessed need) and provide advice on and coordinate access to respite services in a carer's local area.

Phone: 1800 200 422

www.agedcareaustralia.gov.au

Aged Care Complaints Scheme

The Aged Care Complaints Scheme provides a free service for people to raise their concerns about the quality of care or services being delivered to people receiving residential or community aged care services that are subsidised by the Australian Government.

Phone: 1800 550 552

<http://agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au>

Carers Victoria

Carers Victoria is the only statewide organisation in Victoria that has family carers as its primary focus. We offer direct services to support carers in their caring role, as well as education and training and advocacy programs to increase awareness of carers and carers' issues.

Phone: 1800 242 636

www.carersvictoria.org.au

Carers Victoria Respite Connections

A program of Carers Victoria, we provide support and respite assistance to carers living in the Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. This includes carers of the aged, of people with a disability, carers of people with mental health issues and also young carers.

37 Albert St Footscray 3011

Phone: 9396 9550

www.carersvictoria.org.au (Click on How can we Help? And then choose Respite Connections)

Elder Rights Advocacy

A free and confidential service promoting the rights of people receiving aged care services – both residential services and services in the home.

Phone: 1800 700 600

www.era.asn.au

EARS – Emergency After Hours Response Service

Provides emergency in-home respite care, telephone support and interpreting services for the deaf. Operates in the Northern, Western and Eastern metropolitan regions of Melbourne and the Grampians. 5pm –9am Monday to Friday, and 24 hours on weekends.

Phone: 1800 727 280

TTY: 1800 555 677

<http://www.respitenorthandwest.org.au>

