

# IS IT AGEING OR IS IT DEMENTIA?

**Your free guide to  
caring for ageing  
Queenslanders.**



**“I go to [people’s] homes and provide dementia support in whatever capacity that looks like.**

**We talk about dementia. We talk about the progression of dementia. We can sit down and look at future planning. What does that look like... for the person you’re caring for?”**



Nerida,  
Dementia Care Consultant



# THANK YOU FOR SHOWING YOU CARE

## Care is at the heart of all we do.

Over two decades of working with BlueCare, I’ve seen the ways we approach wellbeing, health, and ageing change significantly – and for the better.

On any ordinary day, a person in my care may raise an issue that’s been challenging them. Sometimes the solution may be just a once-off visit to plan for the future, other times it’s a weekly or monthly visit, or a full-time role supporting a person.

It’s important for us all as Queenslanders to know the signs of ageing and dementia, for the sake of our loved ones and family members. This guide will help you to spot when the changes our loved ones experience as they age may reveal something a little different.

Inside you’ll find tips on how to keep a lookout for changes to your own body and mind, and how to talk to our loved ones about ageing, and dementia.

**It’s important that we don’t ignore the signs – and learn how to have conversations that can change lives.**

Thank you again for showing you care,

Nerida



# IS IT GETTING OLDER, OR IS IT DEMENTIA?

**As we age, it's normal to forget things, to feel more tired or even get confused. For some, it can be an isolating experience, but it is in fact a common part of getting older.**

With a bit of extra support from loved ones, it can be much easier to navigate the changes in getting older. But when a forgetful moment turns into forgetting days of the week, or key details like names or addresses – it may be something more serious, like dementia. Learning about the signs is the first step you can take to show you care.

Dementia is an umbrella term describing more than 100 diseases that affect memory, cognition and behaviour. There is no known cure for dementia, but research shows that its progress can be slowed through focused care and support.

Understanding the warning signs is key to supporting your loved one. It may be an underlying cause like stress or depression, or it may be a sign that it's time to seek some extra support.

**DEMENTIA IS THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR AUSTRALIANS.**

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019



# WHAT DO I LOOK FOR?

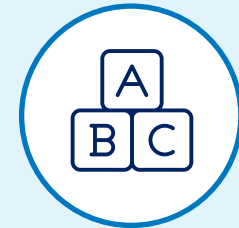
The symptoms of dementia may not be immediately obvious. However, it's important to look out for signs – the sooner dementia is diagnosed, the sooner you can access support, information and medication that may help slow its progression.



Symptoms of dementia include:



**Memory loss** affects daily function



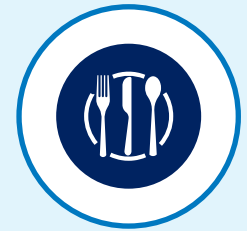
**Problems with language** or mismanaging finances or numbers



**Mood swings,** changes in behaviour or loss of initiative



**Misplacing items** in inappropriate places



**Difficulty performing daily tasks** such as cooking a meal

If you notice your loved one showing any of the above signs consistently, it's important to seek medical advice as soon as possible. Only a GP or specialist can diagnose dementia.



# HOW DO I START THE CONVERSATION?

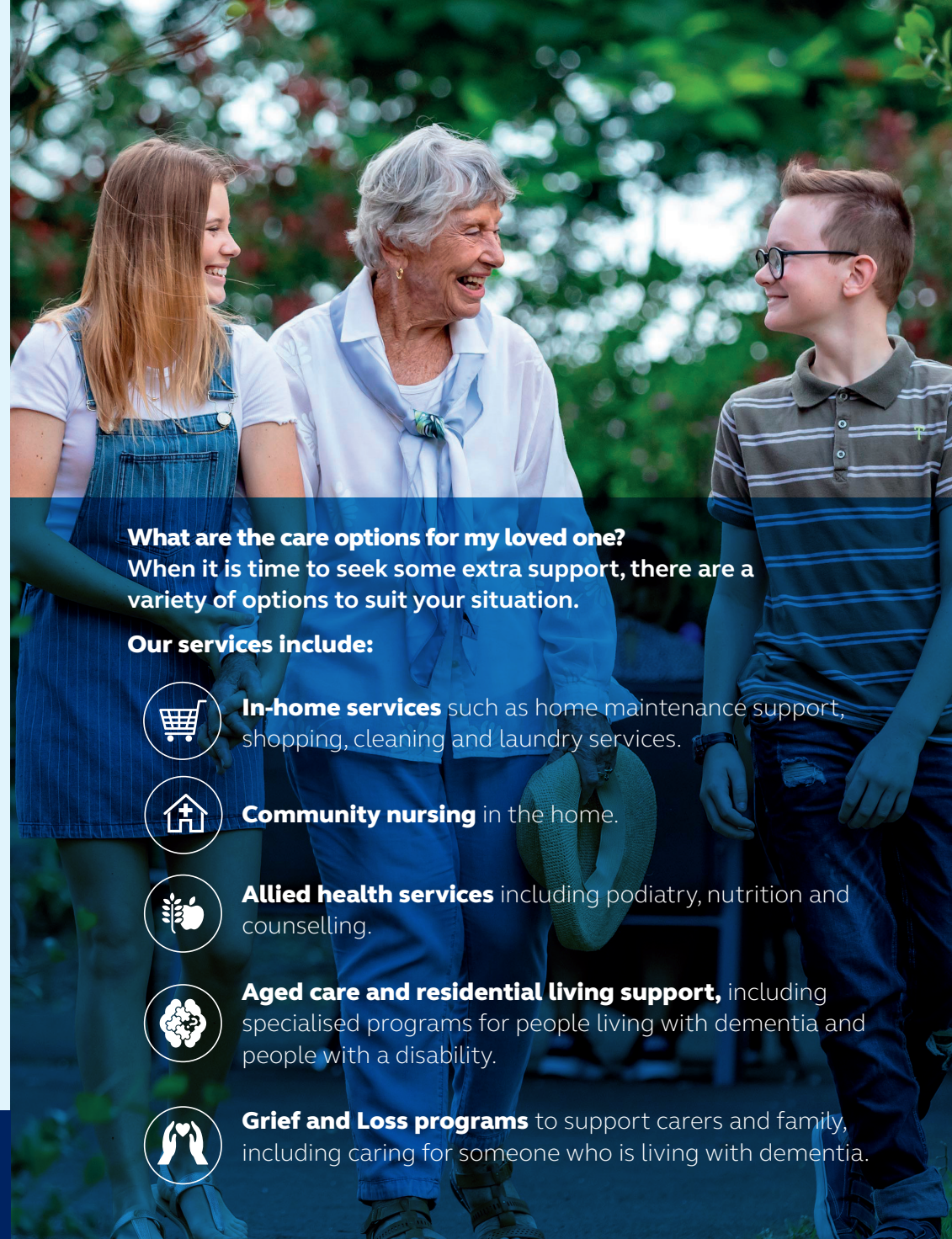
Starting a conversation about ageing and dementia with a loved one can involve feelings of guilt and fear.

These worries can often be alleviated with home care services that enable people to remain independent in their homes for as long as possible.

Here are some tips for starting the conversation about aged care and home services:

- **Start the conversation early**, so it can be a discussion about future plans.
- **Be sensitive to concerns when discussing home care.** Face to face is best, and be prepared to revisit the conversation later if it is upsetting.
- **Accentuate the benefits of home care**, such as your loved one having more time to do things they enjoy.
- **Engage with a home care provider** who can inform you about the range of services available to help your loved one live life their way.

You can learn more about tips on choosing the right aged care home at our website: [bluecare.org.au](http://bluecare.org.au)



**What are the care options for my loved one?**  
When it is time to seek some extra support, there are a variety of options to suit your situation.

**Our services include:**



**In-home services** such as home maintenance support, shopping, cleaning and laundry services.



**Community nursing** in the home.



**Allied health services** including podiatry, nutrition and counselling.



**Aged care and residential living support**, including specialised programs for people living with dementia and people with a disability.



**Grief and Loss programs** to support carers and family, including caring for someone who is living with dementia.



# HOW CAN I HELP?

**BlueCare relies on the generosity of Queenslanders to continue providing exceptional aged care support. Our programs rely on ongoing donations to cover the gap between public funding and a rapidly increasing need.**

Specialist dementia care, including evidence-based programs and Memory Support Units are crucial to improving outcomes. Your ongoing support can provide opportunities to empower ageing Queenslanders to live life their way.

## **Your support can help:**



Create new engaging spaces for gardening, reading and painting.



Craft memory boxes, so precious life memories won't be lost forever.



Offer life-changing services to people who otherwise couldn't access care and support.



Ensure that ageing Queenslanders are given the opportunity to live their life with dignity, and on their terms.



**“In talking to people here at BlueCare... it was all about, ‘How can we support you? How can we make this transition easier for you? How can we do this the best possible way?’”**

**Karen, with mum Ann, who lives in a BlueCare Memory Support Unit.**

**You can learn more about how BlueCare can help you care for ageing Queenslanders at our website: [bluecare.org.au](http://bluecare.org.au)**

# DON'T IGNORE THE SIGNS OF DEMENTIA.

**Your support today can help  
BlueCare provide specialised care  
for Queenslanders into the future.**



 [bluecare.org.au](https://bluecare.org.au)

BlueCare is proudly part of the UnitingCare family



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