

# Resource Book of Leisure Activities



**Fun-filled, stimulating activities to facilitate social integration  
for residential care clients of all cultural backgrounds**

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# Resource Book of Leisure Activities

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# Introduction

## The Purpose of this Book

This resource contains 15 stimulating activities which can be used to improve the quality of life for people living in residential care facilities.

Often newly admitted older residents experience difficult and mixed emotions after having to leave their home, family, friends and their community. Some may have lived in their previous home all of their lives. Others may have become used to living alone with no family support.

It is widely appreciated that moving into a residential care facility represents a whole new world to which the resident must adjust, and activities are therefore provided to make residents feel welcomed and engaged.

However, new residents from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds face further difficulties. Often they must learn to communicate, in English only, with staff and other residents living under the same roof.

For some CALD clients with limited English skills, this communication barrier causes additional stress. All of these factors compound to remind them of the traumas they faced at the time they migrated to Australia. Many post war migrants faced torture and trauma, and bear psychological scars.

The relocation into residential care may even trigger, in these individuals, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with symptoms that may be confused with dementia – including inability to concentrate, or to communicate in English. They may try to separate themselves from others or refuse to be part of any activities. This leads to further social isolation, which can deteriorate many health conditions and cause depression.

For Diversional Therapists/Activity Officers, the admission of new residents poses a challenge: to gain as much insight as possible into the lives of those new residents, in order to tailor activities to meet the psychological, physical and cognitive needs of each resident and aid them in adjusting to their changed life circumstances.

Taking time to gain information from the new residents' family and friends is invaluable, however at times these sources may be limited.

The activities in this book are designed to support the work of the DT/AO, by not only making residents of all backgrounds feel welcomed, engaged and entertained, but also by breaking down cultural and language barriers.

Above all, these games assist residents to communicate freely, revealing their personalities, sharing their own life stories with staff and other residents, and becoming receptive to the stories and viewpoints of others.

# Activity Charades

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This fun activity encourages interaction whilst it improves knowledge and understanding of clients/residents' past interests and hobbies.

It can also assist in building rapport amongst clients/residents, and with activity staff.

## Preparation

- 1 Cut out pictures related to a variety of different activities such as hobbies and sports.

Alternatively, ask your clients/residents to draw pictures of various activities such as hobbies or sports which they have enjoyed in the past.

- 2 Glue the pictures to cardboard to make playing activity cards.

## How to Play

- 1 Divide your clients/residents into two teams to play against each other (Team 1 and Team 2).
- 2 Team 1 receives an activity card. Members of this team have two minutes to discuss the activity and how to act out and describe it to the opposing team. They choose a leader, and this person then verbally describes or mimes the activity without naming it.
- 3 Players from Team 2 must correctly guess and name the activity presented by the leader of Team 1. One guess per player of the opposite team is recommended.
- 4 After guesses have been made, switch the teams to play.
- 5 Every player who correctly guesses the activity earns one point for their team. The team with the most points wins.



Prepare your activity cards with images of different activities.



Team players act out or describe the activities, for the opposing team to name.

Examples: golf, cricket, bowling, skiing, sewing, fishing, singing, photography, knitting, cooking, gardening, camping, yoga, playing a musical instrument, etc.

- This activity can also be played by individuals within a group.
- A player who has participated in the activities in the past and who encourages reflection on their topic could be awarded bonus points for their group.
- The Activity Officer can encourage participants to reflect on their past experiences related to the activities or lack of access to the activities.





This game is suitable for a group of up to 15 people. It requires minimal English skills, no preparation or equipment, and encourages perception of others, memory skills, interaction and laughter.

## How to Play

- 1** People in the group look at each other for a period of several minutes, and try to remember how each person is dressed, what they have on their hands (watch, ring etc), what shoes they wear, their hair style and other details of their apparel.
- 2** The Diversional Therapist or Activity Officer picks one person from the group to be the Observer and asks that person to leave the room for a period of three minutes.
- 3** During this time another person is selected from the group to change something about themselves – for example to put the watch on their other hand, take off their shoes, put a hat on, etc.
- 4** The Activity Officer now calls the Observer back into the room and asks the Observer to find which group member has made any changes, and to say what changes have been made.
- 5** Group members take turns in being the Observer, and their results are recorded. Each member can have one or several turns.

The winner of the game is given a special award, rosette or certificate, and is named “Best Observer” for the month/session.



→ To increase the level of difficulty, the Activity Officer can ask two, three or more group members to change something about themselves.



# Bonjour Madame

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As well as providing good exercise for the memory, this game is very relaxing and fun. It encourages laughter. It is for two to ten players, and is suitable for residents/clients who speak little or no English.



## Preparation

- 1 You will need the following cards from a standard deck: Nine, Ten, Jack, Queen, King and Ace in all four suits (total 24 cards). If more than four people are playing it is recommended to add a second deck.

## How to Play

- 1 One player places the cards one by one face up on the table in a pile.
- 2 All players must respond to the card that is revealed with a specific action:
  - **Nine** – players shake the hand of person sitting next to them;
  - **Ten** – players touch their own left ear;
  - **Jack** – players say, "Bonjour Monsieur";
  - **Queen** – players say "Bonjour Madame";
  - **King** – players stand up and salute;
  - **Ace** – players cover the pile of cards lying on the table with one hand.
- 3 A player who makes a mistake has to take the pile of cards from the table at that time. Similarly the last person who puts their hands over the cards after an Ace is revealed must take all cards from the middle of the table.

The winner is the first person who has no cards in their hands at the end of a round.

Players shake hands when they see a nine.



Players must touch their left ears for a ten.



They must say "Bonjour Monsieur" for a Jack,



or "Bonjour Madame" on seeing a Queen.



For a King they must stand and salute.



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Name of Country	Name of Town	Name of Animal	Name of Bird	Name of Flower	Name of River	Points

This memory game is for groups of up to 20 people.

The Diversional Therapist / Activity Officer may choose to modify the categories for different sessions. Options are endless, for example, add Name of Tree, Human Name, Name of Profession, Name of Mineral, etc.

The game can also be timed to increase difficulty, eg: provide two minutes per letter.

## Preparation

- 1 Each player will need a copy of the above table, printed on a piece of paper. Two players are selected to help run the game.

## How to Play

- 1 One selected player starts pronouncing the letters of the alphabet: A, B, C and so on. A second selected player will say, "stop" at any time they wish.
- 2 The letter at which the speaker stops is the letter that all players must use to fill out one column. For example, if the letter is 'G', they must think of one country, one town, one animal, etc. beginning with 'G'.
- 3 Then the person pronouncing the alphabet continues until the second person once again says, "stop" and the process is repeated until all of the columns are used.

### Scoring:

- 4 At the end of the game all results are tallied. For every answer, a player earns 5 points. A player earns a bonus 5 points, if no-one else from the group has the same word. The winner is the person with the highest score.





It is a psychological fact that people feel better in groups, especially when they're able to recognise familiar faces of people with whom they have spent time in the past.

Groups normally start bonding very quickly, as soon as people begin to know each other; something easily achieved through the most basic of bonding – learning each other's names.

Being within a group of people also promotes receptive behaviour and a welcoming attitude, allowing a person to feel more comfortable.

The knowledge that there are no new faces that may be observing or judging them, their appearance, their background or even their speech or movements, is also a substantial factor for their comfort, especially if they are shy, quiet or reserved.

This can be an important consideration for older people who attend day respite or participate in Diversional Therapy activities within residential facilities.

## How to Play

- 1** A group of people sit in a circle. One person begins by taking hold of a ball. Their task is to hand the ball to the person directly next to them, whilst introducing themselves clearly and loudly (so that everyone in the group can hear).
- 2** The person who has received the ball repeats the words of the person who gave it to them, and then introduces themselves whilst passing on the ball to the person on their other side.
- 3** Once the ball has made its way around the circle and has returned to the person who started the game, this person chooses someone random in the group and passes them the ball, but doesn't introduce themselves like before.
- 4** The recipient of the ball has to then correctly name the person who gave it to them. Once they've correctly named the person who gave them the ball, the process repeats, and the ball is passed to someone else within the circle.
- 5** The process is then repeated until everyone in the group has correctly named each other. The game can be extended by using other facts, such as everyone's professions, favourite colours, foods or anything else.



As time goes on, and the more they learn about each others' backgrounds, likes and dislikes, the stronger the group bond becomes, increasing the overall happiness of each group member. All it takes is a few hours a week. What results then is a sense of acceptance and group involvement, and people within the group then are able to look forward to their next group gathering and to spending time with others.

# The Presenter (charades)

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This game of acting without words transcends language and cultural barriers.

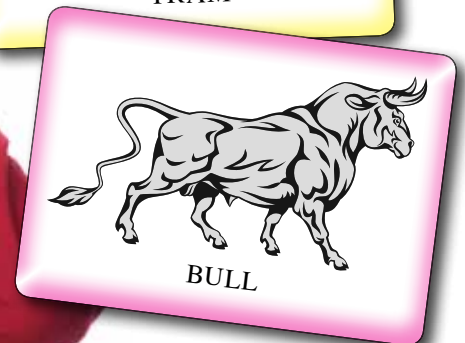
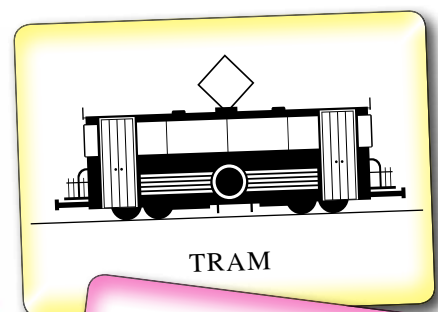
Group members are able to lose their self-consciousness as they laugh together in the effort of communicating and of understanding each other.

## Preparation

- 1 The Activity Officer requires a number of small cards with words or pictures of items (for example: cat, frog, cow, tailor, bus driver, shark, horse, tree, train etc).

## How to Play

- 1 Place the cards on the table, face down. Every person has to pick up one card. The Activity Officer asks the players not to show their card to other people.
- 2 A two minute time limit is given to allow card holders to think about how they will act out what is on their cards. They then take turns being the Presenter.
- 3 The Presenter can use gestures, mime and sound only, to act out what animal, fish, plant, profession, or object is on the card. For example if it is a horse, the Presenter may hand draw the horse, show how many legs horse has, mime the work a horse has to do, how a horse eats, shows a jockey riding the horse and so on.
- 4 The winner is the first person who gives the correct answer. Whoever has the most correct answers is the overall winner, and receives a special award, rosette or certificate as the "Best Presenter" of the month/session.



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There is more in a name than you realise, and 'what's in a name' is a great way of finding out about people's life stories.



Did you know that for Greek-born Australians, celebrating their 'Name Day' may be just as important (if not more so) than their birthday.

Name Day is the day of the year dedicated to the particular saint after whom the person is named.

## How to Play

- 1 Sit participants around a table.
- 2 Start by telling them your own full name, for example:  
"My full name is Margaret Ann Calabrese... Calabrese is an Italian name, however that is my husband's and it felt funny to become 'Italian' at a certain point of my life as I come from an Irish background and my maiden name is 'O'Brien'... My first name Margaret is after my grandmother... My middle name..."
- 3 Ask all participants to share their names and stories.
- 4 Once you start, a lot of life stories will naturally come up and the game should turn into a very interesting conversation around names and life...





This activity is for exercising listening skills, concentration and memory. It is also good for opening up discussions relating to lifestyle and culture.

Players need to listen carefully to remember which fruit names have already been used and to react immediately when it is their turn.

You can organise the auction for many other topics such as vegetables, animals, flowers, etc.

## How to Play

- 1** The players are seated in a circle. The Activity Officer stands in the middle in order to run the 'auction', and instructs players that every person has to say the name of the fruit they brought for sale. It must be a fruit available in Australia, and no fruit name can be used twice.
- 2** The first person gives the name of a fruit, for example, "apple", whilst the others listen to memorise what fruit has been named. The person next to them must then immediately name another fruit, and play continues around the circle.
- 3** If a player is not able to give the name of a new fruit, or if they give the name of a fruit which was already named, the Activity Officer begins to auction the last named fruit, for example "apples one, apples two, apples a third time. The game is over."

The person who named the fruit which was auctioned, in this case the apple, is the winner.

- After the game, the Activity Officer can discuss with the group how some fruit can be prepared, what meals can be made from different fruits, etc.
- Maybe some participants are allergic to fruits. If so, which ones?
- Players can reminisce about fruits growing in their gardens, and meals they made for their families and for celebrations using fruits as ingredients.
- Those who come from different countries and those who have travelled, can say what different fruits are eaten around the world.

→ The group can also prepare an afternoon or morning tea from fruits.



### Fruits available in Australia include:-

- Apples
- Apricots
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Cherries
- Custard Apples
- Figs
- Grapefruit
- Grapes
- Honeydew Melons
- Kiwifruit
- Lemons
- Limes
- Mandarines
- Mangoes
- Melons
- Nectarines
- Oranges
- Passionfruit
- Pawpaws
- Peaches
- Pears
- Persimmons
- Plums
- Pineapples
- Raspberries
- Rockmelons
- Strawberries
- Tangelos
- Watermelons

# Let's Get to Know Each Other Better

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Do you have a new resident? This activity will assist you with introducing a new person to the group.

Also this activity is beneficial for the new resident to obtain more information about people living in this particular facility and attending the activities.

## Preparation

- 1 You will need a table, chairs, blank cards, pens and a shoebox.
- 2 Players are seated around the table. Every person is given a blank card and a pen.

## How to Play

- 1 Ask participants to write a few details about themselves on the cards: -
  - a) How tall they are
  - b) Their hair colour
  - c) Their eye colour
  - d) Hobbies and activities they love
  - e) Dress/shirt colour (for an easy guess)
- 2 Collect the cards, put them inside a shoebox and mix them well.
- 3 Ask each person to take a card from the box.
- 4 Going around the table, the Activity Officer asks people to read the information from their card and to tell the group which person the information relates to. Every player has three guesses.
- 5 The players who give correct answers receive some surprise gift or acknowledgement. They may for example be named "clever mind" or "smart eyes".

Players write some personal details on blank cards.



The cards are put in a shoebox and mixed together well.



Each player draws a card and matches it to the correct resident.

This game is particularly challenging if the details supplied are not too obvious.

- One goal of this activity is for residents and Activity Officers to obtain more information about the people living in a residential facility, especially about those admitted recently.
- From the information provided, the Activity Officer can support residents with organising further activities related to their hobbies.



This activity is a perfect opportunity for residents in care or community settings to share their stories and get to know each other.

It takes residents back to fond memories of a time when trams were used.

The aim is to increase the social interaction between residents by sharing their life experiences.

This also assists the Activity Officer/ Diversional Therapist to gain insight into the lives of their residents to aid in providing holistic care.

## Preparation

- 1 You will need an odd number of chairs (for example, 11) and a musical instrument such as a bell or a whistle. Place the chairs into two rows, opposite to each other, in a formation similar to the old tram setting (the space between the two rows should be about 30 – 50 cm).

## How to Play

- 1 Ask all the players to take a seat in the rows of chairs, which are set up as above in a tram-like formation. The odd last chair in one of the rows is occupied by the Activity Officer/Diversional Therapist.
- 2 The game leader will sound a bell or whistle similar to the conductor's or tram driver's signal when departing from a station, and ask people to start conversing on a specific topic (for example: my professional career, my family, my overseas trips, my best home/pet/garden, etc.)
- 3 Every person starts talking on this subject with those sitting opposite. Their job is to keep the flow of conversation going.
- 4 After 5-10 minutes the game leader stops the conversation and passes the musical instrument to another person, who becomes the new game leader. All the players also move to the chair on their left.
- 5 The new game leader gives the musical signal and selects a new topic for discussion, and these steps repeat until each player has had a turn as game leader. Through these changes of seats and topics, every person has a chance talk to all other people involved in the game.

After the game you can ask the residents about their feelings and give them the opportunity to reminisce about the good old times when trams were used. For many, this will bring back a flood of memories.





The "Warm-Cold-Hot" game brings a lot of laughter to a group, and is very good for breaking the ice and refreshing the atmosphere.

It is easily played by clients/residents with limited English.

This game is very old. It was, and probably still is, very popular in Poland. There it is played by both children and adults on different occasions such as celebrations, camps, and meetings.



## How to Play

- 1** The Activity Officer/Diversional Therapist asks one person from the group to supply a small personal belonging such as a watch, shoe or cosmetic item.
- 2** The person who provides this object now leaves the activity room and waits outside to be called. Whilst they are gone, their belonging is hidden from view, somewhere in the room. The person is then invited back into the room.
- 3** The group picks a helper who will assist the person to look for their own belonging. This helper has to use three expressions in directing the seeker: warm, cold or hot.
- 4** The helper observes the seeker's movements and must advise if they are getting closer or further away using only these three expressions.
  - The helper will say, "warm" and "warmer" to instruct the seeker that they are getting closer to the hidden object.
  - The helper uses "cold" and "colder" to inform the seeker that they are distancing themselves from the hidden object, and need to change direction.
  - The word "hot" informs the seeker that they are close to the hidden object.
- 5** The helper gives the seeker feedback on a non-stop basis to direct their movement as the seeker looks around the room.

When the seeker finds the hidden object everybody claps!

- When the seeker is very close to the object, the helper may advise that they are "very hot", "dangerously hot", "volcanic lava hot" etc. This will alert the seeker to focus only on a specific area.
- In another version of this game, the entire group of people helps the seeker by crying out the three words, warm, cold and hot. This version is a great deal of fun but be conscious that it can also be very noisy.

This game is suited to a small group of up to ten clients/residents.

The goal is for players to learn how they can change their interpretation of the unlucky incidents in life and find a positive side to whatever has happened.

It guarantees a lot of laughter and fun for all players.

→ You can also divide the players into two groups – one team of pessimists and one team of optimists – and the team members then take turns in adding to the story.

This variation can make the game faster and more dynamic.

→ A player who contributes an incorrect sentence, which should belong to the opposite role, is disqualified and leaves the game.

## 1 Preparation

The Activity Officer or Diversional Therapist selects two people from the group, and explains that one person will play the role of an optimist, and the second person will play the role of a pessimist who always sees the bad side of any life situation.

## How to Play

- 1 The pessimist starts the game with a sentence describing an unlucky situation they have experienced, for example, "One day when I was walking with my grandson to the shopping centre, he fell and started crying".
- 2 The optimist may then say, "I tried to help him stand up, and noticed \$10 under a stone".
- 3 The pessimist has to continue this sentence, for example, "I nearly grabbed this \$10 note, but the strong wind was quicker, and the money flew away in the wind".
- 4 The optimist will continue, once again developing a positive side to the story, for example, "The wind blew this \$10 note onto the coat of a homeless person".
- 5 The game continues between the two until they become stuck for ideas. The winner is the person who says the last sentence!

Another pair of residents are then selected to play the pessimist and optimist role.



The pessimist must present unlucky situations to the group.



The optimist turns each story into a positive.





This activity is ideal for residents in a care facility or community setting.

It assists the Activity Officer in establishing a group of residents who know and understand each other, and who feel pleasure when meeting at daily activities.

It assists residents to feel integrated with the other people living under the same roof, and to find others who have matching interests and/or similar health or psychological issues.

### The aims of this game:

- To break down barriers between residents and make them feel integrated into the facility environment;
- To assist residents in creating new relationships, and developing feelings of belonging;
- To reduce tension between people so as to assist residents to accept their new home.

## Preparation

- 1 You will need blank cards or pieces of paper, pencils, and a box.

## How to Play

- 1 Ask the residents to write on their cards some general information about themselves, for example: 'I am always serious', or 'I enjoy the funny side of life', 'I love music, reading, birdwatching and bushwalking', 'I speak fluent Italian', or 'I can play the trumpet', etc.
- 2 Everyone puts their cards in the box. Shake the box thoroughly and then everyone takes one card out. If someone accidentally takes their own card, they should return it to the box and try again.
- 3 Now every person must talk individually with every other person involved with this activity, to discover their hobbies and interests, and the characteristics of their personality.
- 4 The goal of each participant is to discover the person who wrote the card which is currently in their hand.
- 5 The residents who find the author of their card should be awarded some small gift, or perhaps a certificate for "Top Detective", as organised by the Diversional Therapist / Activity Officer.



Because each participant involved in this activity interacts individually with every other person, there is a great likelihood that some communication barriers will be broken and that after this exercise, participants will start to converse more freely during meal times or when they meet in other places within the facility.

This game is a wonderful memory and concentration exercise, and brings a lot of laughter to the group.

Participants have to listen carefully to the other game players and try to remember what they said.

## How to Play

- 1** The game is started by the Diversional Therapist/Activity Officer, who says: "I am a Spanish Princess; in my kitchen is a gold frying pan."
- 2** The next player must repeat this sentence and add another item which may be in the princess' kitchen, for example: "I am a Spanish Princess; in my kitchen is a gold frying pan, and a silver pot."
- 3** The third person repeats the entire sentence of the last player and adds a third item, for example: "I am a Spanish Princess; in my kitchen is a gold frying pan, a silver pot and three kilograms of pepper."
- 4** A player who forgets to repeat any item in the sentence is disqualified and the game continues. The winner is the last person remaining in the game, who has been able to repeat all the items added by all of the players.

## Other Versions

The Activity Officer can use the same game rules in many scenarios. For example, a gender-neutral topic for this game could be 'Planning my Trip.' In this version players must add items which they plan to take on a holiday.

For example, the Diversional Therapist may start the game with: "Tomorrow I am going on holiday to the Gold Coast, and I am taking a camera". The second player may add a backpack; the third one may add walking shoes, etc.

As previously, each game player must add another item which will be taken by a person going on holiday.

- In some instances, the Diversional Therapist may choose to give permission to the participants to make notes of the sequence of items as they are added. Players still have to concentrate on the game, and carefully listen to the other people.
- To make this game more challenging, every game player can be required to use a different first letter – for example the first player must add an item starting with 'A', the second player with 'B' and so on.





As well as providing a fascinating memory and concentration exercise, this activity opens the door for a valuable discussion about safety issues.

After the game there is an excellent opportunity to commence a discussion, topics being:-

- 1) How important good observation is, and how valuable it is to police after a crime;
- 2) What residents should do if they notice a strange person in the facility;
- 3) What steps to take for their safety when going outside the facility, etc.

The Diversional Therapist may further enhance the discussion by inviting an officer from the local Police Station to address the residents about safety issues for older people.

## Preparation

- 1 The Diversional Therapist/Activity Officer finds a person to assist in this game, and prepares a series of actions for the assistant to perform.

## How to Play

- 1 The Diversional Therapist/Activity Officer informs participants that they are expecting a special guest who will visit them today.
- 2 Shortly after, the guest enters the activity room and performs a series of actions which was previously arranged with the Diversional Therapist/Activity Officer, for example:
  - 1) The guest enters the activity room wearing a hat;
  - 2) Without speaking, he removes the hat with his left hand and places it on a chair;
  - 3) After a few seconds the guest replaces the hat on his head, using his right hand;
  - 4) The guest then bends down and removes a shoe from his left foot;
  - 5) He starts waving his hand holding the shoe and calling, "Taxi!";
  - 6) The guest pretends to open a taxi door, sits on a seat and asks an imaginary taxi driver to take him to Parliament House in Canberra;
  - 7) While seated, he opens a newspaper and starts reading;
  - 8) After two minutes he asks the imaginary taxi driver to stop the taxi;
  - 9) He pays the imaginary taxi driver a certain amount of money for his trip;
  - 10) He stands up and leaves the activity room.
- 3 Several minutes later, the guest returns to the activity room holding a piece of paper with a detailed description of the role he just played (step by step, as above).
- 4 Now the Diversional Therapist asks players to act as eye witnesses during a hearing session in Court, and they are each asked to describe everything which they remember of the scene they just witnessed.
- 5 They can either write down everything they remember, or they can each be given one question, such as, "What clothing did the guest wear?" (shirt colour, trousers, etc), or, "Describe his facial appearance, height, colour of hair and eyes", or, "What were his exact words?"

It would be extraordinary if all the people remembered every detail of the scene. More likely some residents will remember the hat or shoe, another will notice the address which the guest gave to the taxi driver, or another will recall what newspaper he read. They will be amazed at how their recollection differs.

## About the PICAC Program

The Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) Program aims to equip aged care providers to deliver culturally appropriate care to older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

The primary outcomes of the PICAC program include:

- More aged care services delivering culturally appropriate care to older persons from culturally and linguistically diverse communities;
- Older people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities having increased access to culturally appropriate residential and community-based aged care services; and
- Older people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities having greater capacity to make informed decisions about residential and community-based aged care.

The PICAC program incorporates activities including training, information sessions, workshops, and resource development.

## The PICAC Program in Queensland is coordinated by Diversicare

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