

Supporting choices for older people: The Living Well and Dying Well program in aged care facilities

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In her presentation, Robyn will describe how a successful and sustainable program for promoting dignity in the last years of life has been developed and is operating in north-west Tasmanian residential aged care facilities. Key elements include a service model (Gold Standard Framework in care homes) initially developed overseas, which was adapted for use in regional Australia, plus a strong person-centred focus, and a team approach to advance care planning, supported by a growing eHealth capacity to document and share information. Exciting developments in eHealth capability are beginning to support and extend the Primary Health Care Team's capacity to align care with the older person's dignity, their values, preferences, evolving priorities, advance directives, and negotiated goals of care.

Care is organised around a framework (7Cs: better communication, coordination and continuity of care, control of symptoms, care of the dying, care of all carers, and continued learning). This supports slow deep culture change with high value placed upon each team member's quality relationships with residents and families. These relationships strengthen the team's capacity to discover what may be the 'right' thing to do for this person (right care, right time, right place, and involving the right people).

The program enables the team to plan ahead, preparing everyone to be 'on the same page', with residents and families reassured and in agreement about the team's duty of care when inevitable deteriorations occur. The program encourages safe ethical processes for activating pre-authorised Clinical Action Plans for the Dying Phase and for implementing a minimum protocol (End of Life Pathway) to guide care in those last days of life. Staff become more inspired and confident to offer and deliver supportive and palliative care, focusing on the person's dignity and quality of living—especially in those last months, weeks, and days. The program is sustained through strong partnerships between Primary Health Care Community Teams, aged care providers, Tasmanian Health Organisation (NW), and State and Federal Governments.