



TOMNET

THE OLDER MENS NETWORK INC

Aged Care Visiting Program for Volunteers

Overview

TOMNET Volunteers regularly visit older men in Aged Care facilities within Toowoomba.

Meaningful conversation is an important gift TOMNET Volunteers provide to older men in Aged Care facilities. Often, men find it difficult to participate in group activities with other residents due to a variety of reasons including health, transport or personal issues. The TOMNET Aged Care Visiting program provides a safe environment for older men to actively participate in conversations.

Our purpose is the giving of emotional and social support for older men.

Why we have a visiting program?

- To provide social interaction with male residents who may be socially isolated within an Aged Care facility
- Opportunity to share personal stories and hear from others
- Provide interaction with “outsiders” - increase the social sphere of men in gated communities and encourage them to interact with each other
- Develop mateships in a safe environment

Most people living in residential aged care facilities are women. 70% of permanent residents being female and more women widowed (64%) than their male counterparts (26%)

Source: Residential aged care in Australia 2010-11

How we setup a Visiting Team

- Identify an Aged Care facility that may be interested
- Meet with facility staff to explain the purpose, the criteria and to seek approval
- Liaise with the Aged Care facility to provide an area for older men to meet that is suitable for meetings
i.e. quiet, large enough for a dozen men, good lighting and free from distractions
- Encourage a minimum of 5 Volunteers to participate in the group
- Encourage commitment from Volunteers to attend regularly

Who do we visit at the Aged Care facility?

- Independent Living residents – older men living in independent units who are either single, widowed or married
- Assisted Living residents – older men who require some assistance from Aged Care staff

When is a suitable time to meet?

- Talk with a representative from the Aged Care facility
- What similar activities are currently being offered at the Aged Care facility?
 - » Are there outside activities that may impact on our meeting times?
Could we have the meetings on Weekends if more suitable?
- What day and time suits the Volunteers?

What the program is unable to provide

- Not based on a health care service or a medical model
- There is not one activity that is the basis for the group meeting
- The program is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach

Helpful Hints when starting the group

1. Create a short factsheet for Volunteers (Template supplied)
 - » Location
 - » Contact details
 - » Times (weekly, monthly or fortnightly)
 - » Sign-in details
2. Create a flyer for the facilities noticeboard, newsletter (Template Supplied)
3. Create name badges for Volunteers
 - » Include name, Volunteer, logo if possible
 - » Aged Care facilities may have Visitor badges
4. Create mailing list of Residents to send reminder letters each month (optional)
 - » Try to keep costs to a minimum
 - » Privacy laws may prevent this step (details may not be made available unless agreed to by residents)
5. Ask residents to invite other residents to the meeting. If possible, identify a leader within the facility who will invite other male residents. Keep costs to a minimum by sharing costs with the aged care facility or other Volunteers. Sponsorship may be an option, but it is preferable to keep costs low in the first instance. Encourage more than one group leader for each visiting team. Aim to share the responsibility with residents and Volunteers.





Questions to ask Aged Care facility staff

<input type="checkbox"/>	Which format would be the best way to interact with Aged Care residents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Wandering Volunteers (one-on-one chats)▪ Barbecue and Group Chat▪ Group Chat at specific day/time<ul style="list-style-type: none">» e.g. 10.00am – 11.30am, 1st Monday of month (except Public Holidays)» February to December time-frame
<input type="checkbox"/>	What is the level of care at the facility?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ High Risk, Low Risk, Dementia
<input type="checkbox"/>	Where is a good location/ room for the meeting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Is there a wet weather option if meeting outside?▪ Is there appropriate lighting?▪ Is the room large enough?▪ Can the layout of the room be changed?▪ Is there any equipment available – barbecue, DVD player?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the meeting include food/coffee?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Who will supply the food? Are there food restrictions?▪ Who will supply Tea and Coffee – AT/MT?▪ Is there a tea/coffee cart at certain times that could be utilised?▪ Will there be assistance from staff for tea/coffee service?▪ What is the cost – long term?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there staff to assist (Aged Care facility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What support will staff provide?<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Assisting residents to the meeting» What diet issues do we need to be aware of?▪ Will a Risk Assessment be necessary to be carried out?▪ What assistance to residents can Volunteers provide if required?<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Volunteer Training/ Manual Handling Training?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Do we need to sign up as Volunteers with the Aged Care facility?▪ Are National Police Checks required?<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Who will cover the cost of police checks?▪ Are Blue Cards required
<input type="checkbox"/>	Procedure upon arrival for meeting/Volunteering?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Is there a sign-on register at the entrance?▪ Where do we park at the Aged Care facility
<input type="checkbox"/>	What do we do in an emergency?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What if there is an emergency with a resident?▪ Is there a safety induction for the Aged Care facility?▪ Where is the Rally Point for fire safety?▪ Is there an incident reporting procedure?▪ Do we need Manual Handling Training?

Meeting/visiting styles for Volunteers visiting Aged Care facilities

1. Wandering Volunteer

Wandering Volunteers visit older men who are unable to attend meetings or participate in organised activities either at the facility or off site. Wandering Volunteers can work in pairs, or individually when visiting. Volunteers may visit more than one resident during a session.

Older men often struggle to participate in organised activities with other Aged Care residents for a variety of reasons. Health, mobility and an unwillingness to share their problems in a closed environment are major factors contributing to the isolation of older men within Aged Care facilities.

Volunteers will liaise with Aged Care facility staff to decide on a time that is suitable for visiting and ensure there is no conflict with regular activities. A major benefit for the Volunteer is the flexibility of visiting arrangements, as most facilities are open 7 days per week, the Volunteer can easily find times suitable for visiting.

Liaising with Aged Care facility staff is critical, staff can identify older men who are isolated and may suggest older men who need a visit on any particular day.

2. Barbecue and group chat meeting

The purpose of the visit is to engage in meaningful conversation with residents before, during and after the main barbecue event has occurred. Volunteers visit the Aged Care facility to cook a barbecue meal for residents. Volunteers work closely with facility staff to cook, serve and clean up. All supplies, barbecue and food items are supplied by the Aged Care facility.

Barbecue meetings encourage residents to gather as a group and socialise with each other, with the potential to include all older men in the facility. The barbecue meeting also provides a fantastic opportunity for residents to talk with 'outsiders' in a supportive environment.

3. Group chat meetings

Volunteers attend the Aged Care facility as a group on a monthly basis to talk with male residents. The group chats consist of up to 5 or 6 Volunteers attending the Aged Care facility at a set time and date each month to chat with male residents. Topics may include life stories of the residents, current news events and other topics to promote meaningful conversation.

Volunteers liaise with facility staff to decide the best time and place for the meeting, which usually last approximately 1 – 2 hours. The meeting may include food and beverage organised by Volunteers or the Aged Care facility. Volunteers should aim to keep costs to a minimum if providing food and beverage.



General comments:

Over time, friendships will develop and residents look forward to your visit. Committing to a regular time and date for visiting is important for residents; most Aged Care facilities have set routines including meal times and daily activities which cannot be changed. To commence visiting, it is important to talk with the facility staff and follow all requirements and procedures that have been set in place. Privacy, emergency, fire and safety procedures, and hygiene rules must be strictly followed and will be outlined by the facility coordinator.

The TOMNET Centre

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