

Real Care the Second Time Around

About ME



*Practical tips for aged care providers
to support their clients to develop
their own About ME one page story*

This publication was developed by Meg Schwarz, Project Officer - Real Care the Second Time Around, Helping Hand Aged Care, and was informed by the following resources:

- Helen Sanderson Associates (www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk)
- Community Circles (www.community-circles.co.uk)
- Australian Journal of Dementia Care (www.journalofdementiacare.com)
- My Home Life (www.myhomelife.org.uk)

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“You know my name, but not my story. Hear what I have done and been through – then you’ll know how to support me”

Forgotten Australian / Care Leaver



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Introduction

This resource aims to assist aged care providers to support their clients to develop their own *About ME* one page story.

About ME and one page stories were developed by Helen Sanderson Associates (UK) and are based on person-centred approaches to care. One page stories are widely accepted for enabling real person-centred services and support.

Using an *About ME* one page story effectively, to have meaningful conversations and deliver outcomes based on client needs, requires a genuine interest and curiosity in exploring what's valuable to a client. It also requires the motivation to find ways to support a person based on their needs.

To support a client to develop their own one page story, it is important that aged care providers first write their own *About ME*. This will enable you to gain an appreciation of its value, the journey that clients will need to undertake when they complete their own story, and its potential to make a real difference to those clients.

The *About ME* one page story is an empowering and enabling tool for anyone. It enables people to voice what matters to them through easy conversations that may use picture cards and words to encourage self-reflection.

Real Care the Second Time Around Project

In June 2019, Helping Hand commenced the Real Care the Second Time Around (RCSTA) project. The RCSTA project was funded by the Australian Government to respond to the aged care needs of Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers. RCSTA was supported by a Co-design Forum of up to 20 people who identified as Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers, and partner organisations Flinders University and Relationships Australia South Australia – Elm Place.

In the last century, over 500,000 children spent their childhoods in institutional and out of home 'care' in Australia. Approximately 440,000 were non-indigenous children called the Forgotten Australians; 50,000 were indigenous children, some from the Stolen Generations; and up to 10,000 were former child migrants from Britain, Ireland and Malta.

Collectively, people who spent their time in institutional and out-of-home care are called Care Leavers. Their negative experiences whilst in 'care' have impacted upon their adulthood, and as they age their experiences have also resulted in significant barriers to care – including difficulty re-telling their stories.

Introduction

In 2021, the RCSTA project facilitated an *About ME* workshop for the Co-design Forum. Developing a one-page summary of their needs was identified by this group at the commencement of the project. Constantly having to re-tell their stories through intake and assessment processes is a concern for Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers – and the *About ME* one page story reduces this need.

As a result of the workshop, most of the group completed their *About ME* one page stories and some of these are included in

this resource. As important, the workshop indicated that an *About ME* story can be used by many people, including people who have a background in trauma.

Thank you to Susan Michael who facilitated the *About ME* one-page story workshop and for your passion for this important person-centred tool. Thank you also to all the Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers who were involved as participants in the RCSTA project and the workshop, and for providing the incentive for the development of this resource.



Real Care the Second Time Around Project Team, Co-design Forum and facilitator Susan Michael

The Why, What, How and Who of an *About ME* One Page Profile

What is an *About ME* one page story?

An *About ME* is a one page summary of what matters to a person and what is important for understanding how to support them.

Why use an *About ME*?

About ME stories capture important information that enable aged care providers to personalise care for each client. They help providers to be aware of the strengths, interests and specific support needs of their clients. These stories can be used to inform genuine person-centred care planning and outcomes.

These stories are a way for clients to have a voice in how they are supported, either in their home or in a residential aged care home, and to have their needs as an individual acknowledged. They can reduce the need for clients who have experienced trauma, to keep re-telling their stories. The continuing need to re-tell those stories can be re-traumatising.

About ME stories are a way for families and carers to share their knowledge and expertise on how best to support their loved ones. They are also a way to share information between staff, for example when casual aged care workers have to cover a shift, and to create a smooth transition. They also provide the opportunity to build positive relationships,

as staff will have prior knowledge of a person's interests and strengths.

About ME stories are not static documents. They can develop over time and can contain the summary for a more detailed person-centred care plan.

How can you develop an *About ME*?

An *About ME* story can be developed by bringing together contributions from the client, their families, friends, carers, and whoever knows them. They can be developed from the information gathered during intake and assessment or during care plan reviews. Once the story is developed, it can be updated at any time and shared (with consent from the client) with staff supporting the person.

Who can help with the development of an *About ME* one page story?

Aged care staff, support workers and volunteers who know the client, can all be involved in the development of the *About ME* story. Furthermore, they can all help by taking and uploading photos onto the profile, provided consent is given by the client. They can also help with typing up information and helping the client choose appropriate graphics that complement their story to individualise it.

The Headings Used in an *About ME* One Page Story

Name:

The name of the person completing the About ME one page story

What people like and admire about me, or, What I like and admire about me:

This section lists the positive qualities, strengths and talents of the person. They can ask others to help complete this.

What and who is important to me:

This is a bullet list of what really matters to the person from their perspective (even if others do not agree). It is detailed and specific. It could include:

- *Who the important people are in the person's life, and when and how they spend time together. For example 'Going shopping with my daughter every Tuesday morning and having lunch afterwards'.*
- *Important activities and hobbies, and when, where and how often these take place. For example, 'Playing cards with friends on Wednesday evening'.*
- *Any routines that are important to the person. For example, 'Getting up at 7am every morning to feed Teddy (pet dog) and taking him for a walk in the park nearby'.*
- *Important and favourite activities. For example 'Singing in the local choir and playing tunes on the piano'.*
- *Things to be avoided that are particularly important to the person. For example 'That people do not touch my possessions, for example, photos, without asking'.*



Each one page story has a photo of the person, if they wish to include it

How best to support me:

This is a list of how to support a person and what is helpful and what is not. It can include any specific triggers and how to avoid or handle them. The information in this section includes what people need to know, and what people need to do. For example:

- *Jan can perceive a negative comment as being reprimanded or disapproved of.*
- *Betty is naturally quiet and may need gentle encouragement to draw her out.*
- *John struggles to ask people to do things or go places with him. It helps him if you suggest people for him to ask and use other ways of helping him join in with activities.*
- *David likes to spend time by himself particularly in the morning. It is important that his need for privacy is understood and acknowledged and that any social support be provided later in the day.*

Putting Together an *About ME* One Page Story

Headings - what this is, and what this isn't

What people like and admire about me, or, What I like and admire about me

What this is:



A summary of your positive characteristics. What do others value about you? What do you value about yourself? What are the positive contributions that you make?

What this isn't:



A list of accomplishments and awards.

What and who is important to me

What this is:



A summary of what really matters to you. This tells people in your own words what's important to you. What your hobbies, interests and passions are. Who is important to you and what makes a 'good' day for you.

What this isn't:



Simply a list of things you like.

How best to support me

What this is:



Specific information that would be useful for other people to know about you, to make sure you get the best support possible.

What this isn't:



A list of very general hints.

Putting Together an *About ME* One Page Story

Asking the right questions - learning from the person

Developing *About ME* one page stories is meant to be an enjoyable process that involves asking a lot of questions, listening, being curious and interested - without being interrogative.

Asking questions is about finding out from the person what the most important things are that matter to them, and how to support them.

You can use butcher's paper or a whiteboard to write answers to questions down and/ or use the person-centred tools at the back of this guide. Remember – a one page story is a one page summary about a client that is meant to help staff know them and provide care for them. It's important to include just the key things under each heading – not everything.

What people like and admire about me, or, What I like and admire about me



This is the heading that usually starts an *About ME* one page story. In this section the person can write down or let you know the qualities that others like about them.

Questions to ask to help fill in this section:

- What do people thank you for?
- What would your family/partner/friend say they like about you?
- What have you done that you are proud of?
- What do you like best about yourself?
- What are your gifts, talents or strengths?

What and who is important to me



This heading describes and lists what excites and motivates a person in their day-to-day life.

Questions to ask to help fill in this section:

- What truly matters to you in everyday life as well as for the future?
- What do you treasure most?
- What does a perfect week look like for you?
- What activities would you not want to miss (for example, a favourite TV program, a walk in the park)?
- What motivates you to DO the things that you do and HOW you do them?
- What are the things that you avoid doing?
- What is important to you at home that should be valued elsewhere?
- Are there things, activities, or people that you can't live without (for example, your pet)?
- What qualities do you like in the people who support you?

How best to support me



This section is about describing how a person would like to be supported or helped when doing different things in their life.

Questions to help a client fill in this section:

- What is helpful to you? What is not?
- What does a good day look like for you? What does a bad day look like for you?
- Are there things that people can do to help you have a good day?
- What information do people need to know about or understand so they will know how to support you?
- Are there places, times or situations where specific supports are needed?
- What do people need to know about you to get on really well with you?
- What makes you feel better when you are stressed, unhappy or unwell?

Don't forget to use the person-centred tools in the back of this guide to start conversations.

You can also use the My Home Life KeyCard Questions in the next section.

Putting Together an *About ME* One Page Story

Creating great conversations with My Home Life

My Home Life (MHL) commenced in the UK as an initiative that promotes quality of life and delivers positive changes in residential aged care facilities for older people. The MHL tools and philosophy are now used in other countries such as Germany and Australia.

MHL is based on a vision for best practice that is evidence-based and uses a range of tools and resources that are relationship-centred.

Following are some of the questions from the My Home Life tools that are called KeyCard Questions and are great as a conversation starter and getting to know

new details about clients. They can help to start conversations that support the development of an *About ME* one page story.

You could cut these questions into rectangles or squares and put them in a small box and ask clients to select them at random.

You can also support the client to go onto the My Home Life website:

myhomelife.uws.ac.uk/scotland/Interactive/KeyCards/jar.html

and use the interactive online activity where you simply click a button to have a KeyCard Question randomly selected.



What things do you dislike?	What do you think is one of the hardest things in life to do?
What things make you happy?	What is your priority for today?
What are you most grateful for?	What would be the first word the person who knows you best would use to describe you?
What do you treasure?	When do you feel truly comfortable?
What for you is the most beautiful sound in the world?	When have you felt pleased with yourself?
What did you do well lately?	Who is the most important person in your life?
What has been the best part of getting older?	What's the kindest thing anyone has said to you?
What do you find funny?	Do you have a motto in life?
Is there something you would like to learn in the next year?	Who do you admire? Why?
Above all, what would you like to be known for?	What helps if you're feeling worried?
What was your first thought when you woke up this morning?	What's your favourite meal?
What keeps you awake at night?	Is there something that you know how to do, that you would like to show others?
What have you learned about life that you would like to share?	What kind of community do you have, or you would like to have?
What's something that is important to you that you won't compromise on?	What helps you if you are feeling lonely?
What's the funniest thing that someone did or said recently?	What are you most proud of?
What's the best way to help someone feel welcome?	What helps you to feel at your best?
Is there anything you would like to get better at? What would help you get there?	What's something that is hard for you to do?
What makes your day?	Describe what it's like to feel free
What makes you smile?	Describe your ideal evening
Is there something you like to do, to show people that they're important to you?	What would you never leave your home without?

Putting Together an *About ME* One Page Story

Support circles - learning from others

Support Circles are based on involving the support of people who know a person to inform the person's care and support. These circles can be used to inform the development of an *About ME* one page story – by including personal knowledge about a person that is important to know for their care.

Circles bring two or more people, including the client, together, to share in the development of a personalised *About ME* one page story.

They are great ways of supporting positive change in a client's life. This can be

about starting a new activity, creating opportunities to connect with other people or sharing observations about a client that supports reviews of care plans.

Circles can be supported by and facilitated by a Circle Facilitator. The following is a step-by-step process to ensure that all conversations within the Circle lead to positive actions and outcomes for the client.

Visit www.community-circles.co.uk/about-circles/who-are-circles-for/older-people/ for more detailed information about Support Circles.



Support circles - a step by step guide

- 1. Awareness raising** Clients are made aware that the aged care organisation can organise Support Circles to inform their care and support, with their consent.
- 2. Someone gets in touch** Clients contact an aged care staff member responsible for organising Support Circles (for example a Lifestyle Assistant).
- 3. Explaining what the Circle does** The aged care staff member, perhaps over a cuppa and a chat, explains how the Support Circles work and seeks consent from the client to nominate and contact family, friends, carers, aged care staff members (people who know the client well) to be part of the Support Circle.
- 4. Choosing a Facilitator** As a group, they may choose a Circle Facilitator (for example a Lifestyle Assistant). The Facilitator will help keep meetings focused on the overall purpose and ensure that they are leading to positive actions. They are given training and full support to understand how circles work.
- 5. Meeting the Facilitator** The first Support Circle is a chance for the group to get to know each other. They meet with the Circle Facilitator and talk about what they are going to be doing in future meetings and where and when to meet. The Facilitator will talk about the *About ME* story and its aim, and how the information informs the care plan and future reviews. They can share a video (see resources section at back of this booklet) that introduces *About ME* one page stories. This gives people time to reflect on what they are going to share about the client that is positive and informs the *About ME* story.
- 6. Person-centred reviews of care plans** Future Support Circle meetings can also discuss person-centred reviews, where client changes or updates to the *About ME* story can be made. The Facilitator will then need to advise the appropriate Coordinator of the proposed changes, who will then ensure that strategies to address these are incorporated into the client's care plan. All staff that support the client will also be informed of the changes.
- 7. Ongoing Support Circle meetings** Future meetings can follow the same format where the Facilitator starts the meeting and the meeting ends in positive outcomes for the client. The client is always the focus of these meetings. Any suggested actions or outcomes will have their full consent.

Putting information into the *About ME* one page story

As you take the information gathered from conversations with the client and with others to put into the *About ME* one page story, remember:

- Write positively and respectfully, with enough detail so that people feel like they know the person from reading it, and know what to do to support the person.
- Avoid generalisations - be as specific as you can.
- Write in plain, everyday English and avoid words and acronyms that people may not understand.
- Add illustrations (photos, clip art) that reflect what is in the profile and ideally chosen by the client.

Using, Sharing and Updating the *About ME* One Page Story

About ME one page stories can be included within the intake/assessment process and can be an important part of a person's care plan.

They are used to build better relationships and a more informed approach to care planning. When care plans are reviewed, so too are the one page stories.

Care plan reviews look at what is important to the client, what's been working and what hasn't.

Each review should automatically generate new or additional information for updating a client's *About ME* one page story.

New information is shared with all staff that support the client, with their consent.

About ME Examples

Three of the following examples of *About ME* stories are from people who identify as Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers, and who were members of the Co-design Forum of Helping Hand Aged Care's Real Care the Second Time Around Project (Josephine, Peter and Cilla).

The fourth *About ME* story is from Meg who was the Project Officer for the RCSTA project and is also a Forgotten Australian.



Josephine

What Josephine found useful about developing her **About ME**

“The workshop helped me think about what really matters to me and record it. It also means I do not have to keep repeating my story and I can give my story to everyone that provides support for me – that’s so important.”

About ME



Name: Josephine

I am a Forgotten Australian / Care Leaver and my cultural heritage is Canadian Blackfoot.

What I like about myself / what others like about me:

I am:

- *Straight forward, no nonsense & an honest communicator*
- *Kind, understanding and accepting of others*
- *A great listener, love learning and learn easily*
- *Always willing to stand up for others and my own rights*
- *Passionate and very hardworking*
- *Witty with a great sense of humour*

What and who is important to me:

- *Having good health*
- *Being with my family and my pets*
- *Being listened to and believed*
- *Having space, not being locked in, or trapped*
- *People understanding my health conditions*
- *Social activities and keeping my mind active (for example quizzes and art)*
- *Respecting my care plan*
- *Being outside, gardening, walking and being with nature*

How best to support me:

- *By listening to me, understanding who Forgotten Australians are and about trauma*
- *Understanding that my history has impacted on my mental and physical health*
- *Asking my permission before you hug me*
- *Don’t dominate me or conversations with me; listen to what I have to say*
- *By being open and honest with me*
- *Being non-judgemental*
- *Understanding the foods (diet) I eat and why*
- *Ensuring I am not in confined spaces, so I feel safe*
- *Presenting information to me in a way I understand*
- *I have a lot of energy but need time to myself to unwind*

Peter

What Peter found useful about developing his **About ME**

“Unless you take time to listen to someone, you don’t know anything about them and you can’t provide the right care. It is important for me as a Forgotten Australian for people to know what my needs are.”

About ME



Name: Peter

I am a Forgotten Australian / Care Leaver. I am profoundly deaf and have a Lions Hearing Dog (Minni).

What I like about myself / what others like about me:

I:

- *Like being treated with respect and likewise, respect others*
- *Am a very kind, easy going, gentle and caring person*
- *Like to help others and feel needed*
- *Am very reliable and loyal*
- *Am very sociable and enjoy being with people but also like having time to myself*
- *Have a good sense of humour, like to laugh and have been called ‘cheeky’!*

What and who is important to me:

- *Enjoying good health and going to Helping Hand’s exercise class on Friday*
- *Caring for and spending time with my wife (Jenny) and friends*
- *Being profoundly deaf, I need people to look at me when they are talking so I can read their lips*
- *Having my Lions Hearing Dog (Service Dog) with me at all times*
- *People knowing that I am allergic to wasps, spiders and bees and that I have an EpiPen*
- *Being liked and accepted for myself - and not judging me*
- *Being and staying independent*
- *People knowing all my health conditions*

How best to support me:

- *Don’t yell at me and assume I am stupid (because of my hearing loss)*
- *Understand who Forgotten Australians are, our history, experiences and trauma*
- *Not having too many people talking at a time (so I can hear)*
- *Treat me as a normal human being*
- *I sometimes need a little motivation to get involved in activities but once I am involved, I enjoy being part of the group*
- *Allow me to disclose information in my own time*

Cilla

What Cilla found useful about developing her *About ME*

"It was good to be able to express what is important to me on paper and feel confident that people who support me will understand my needs without me having to keep repeating myself."

About ME



Name: Priscilla

I am a Forgotten Australian / Care Leaver

What I like about myself / what others like about me:

I am:

- *A strong advocate for Forgotten Australians*
- *Empathetic and compassionate and like to help people*
- *Dedicated, knowledgeable and enjoy learning*
- *Very loyal and trustworthy*

What and who is important to me:

- *My sons, friends and support services for Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers; as well as Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN) and the Alliance for Forgotten Australians (AFA)*
- *Working as an advocate for Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers*
- *My dog Teddy and other pets*
- *My home - as I have had 60 different placements as a child, while I was an SA Ward of the State*
- *My singing and dancing and social interactions. These are meditative for me and help me relax.*
- *Having phone and internet communications.*

How best to support me:

- *Make sure you have trauma training and understand who Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers are*
- *Please learn about what triggers trauma for me*
- *Help me remain in my home as long as possible by providing the support I need*
- *Please ask me what I want or need – don't tell me*
- *It's important that people who support me listen to me and understand what I am saying*
- *I request female care workers to support me for personal care*

Meg

What Meg found useful about developing her *About ME*

"As a Helping Hand staff member and Forgotten Australian, I found that when I developed my own story I could understand how empowering it could be for clients."

About ME



Name: Meg

I am a Forgotten Australian

What I like about myself / what others like about me:

- *Honest and loyal and keeps her word*
- *Kind and compassionate*
- *Determined and focussed and never gives up*
- *Passionate about helping others*
- *Warm sense of humour and enjoys a laugh*

What and who is important to me:

- *Being organised and having a daily plan – ticking things off gives me a sense of achievement!*
- *Being kept in the loop about what's happening within my team*
- *Understanding the purpose of what I am doing and how it fits with the bigger task*
- *Having time to share ideas together with my team*
- *Having clear expectations of my role and responsibilities*
- *Having some time and space to myself to think*
- *Having someone that I can turn to about any worries or concerns that I have and to know that I will be listened to*
- *Working in a positive and optimistic environment*

How best to support me:

- *I like to feel challenged and productive*
- *Starting early gives me time to myself to develop my 'to do' list for the day*
- *Understanding that although I am flexible, I also like to be very organised, so making an appointment with me is best*
- *I like to know when I'm doing a good job - just a quick email to say 'well done' or 'thank you' sometimes - makes me feel appreciated*
- *Take time to listen to my thoughts and feelings*
- *Small gestures such as a smile or 'good morning' help to brighten up my day and make me feel positive*
- *Make it clear to me what you expect of me as an individual within the team so I can ensure that I am fulfilling my role*

Conclusion

About ME one page stories are effective, simple, interactive and empowering resources. They can improve communication and help staff tailor and deliver real person-centred care that meets their clients' needs.

Six key points to remember:

1. *About ME* one page stories are a simple, concise way of communicating personal information about a client
2. They can be fun and interactive, using gentle, conversational and respectful questions that enable clients to reflect on what is important for their care
3. They are written by clients, sometimes with the support of people who know them well
4. The stories outline what is important to clients so care can be tailored for them
5. They are based on evidenced-based, person-centred planning
6. *About ME* one page stories are already used in a variety of health, social care and educational settings

Person-Centred Tools

Helen Sanderson Associates

helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/person-centred-thinking-tools/

The person-centred tools on this website can help you develop an *About ME* one page story with your clients.

Videos

What is a one page story: <https://youtu.be/lda8sVkl6o>

What is a one page story (for people who do not use words to communicate):
<https://youtu.be/-VYE9cVofTg>

