

Story, stories & storytelling

When you tell a story, you spark a connection. This is how humans have communicated since the beginning of time —by telling stories. Stories have been told before humans learned to read and write.

As human beings, we are automatically drawn to stories because we see ourselves reflected in them. Stories have a way of transporting us away from our realities, and our mind opens up to new experiences and perceptions of other people and how they think and feel.

In our Byron Shire Respite Service Day programs, we recognise the importance of story. Our collection of various memorabilia is used to prompt memories and stories. Old photos are also a wonderful resource.
www.tckpublishing.com/stories-matter



Storytelling and dementia

Replacing the pressure to remember with the freedom to imagine

Did you know that storytelling is an excellent way to connect to someone living with dementia? Whether they are sharing an actual memory or fictional anecdote, those who are telling the story feel valued when they are listened to. Stories are a key part of someone's identity.



4 Benefits Of Storytelling For Dementia

- 1. Communication:** Storytelling offers an alternate way in which someone with reduced verbal skills can communicate. It can include gestures, sounds and facial expressions rather than just words.
- 2. Connection:** Storytelling encourages social interaction.

An important part of caring for someone living with dementia is to connect to that person and understand their likes and dislikes. Storytelling enables us to create bonds and learn more about that person. It lets caregivers interact playfully and enjoyably with the person living with dementia.

3. Mood: When living with dementia people become withdrawn leading to isolation and depression. The act of sitting down with someone and hearing their memories, telling or reading a story or making one up together can help to improve mood dramatically.

For someone living with dementia, expressing themselves through a story allows them to feel valued. By building and supporting social connections, loneliness may be reduced.

4. Relaxation: Reminiscence activities such as recalling memories through storytelling have been shown to relax and soothe someone who may be agitated or stressed. www.nursenextdoor.com/blog/benefits-of-storytelling-for-dementia

If you haven't already try storytelling with your loved one. When engaging in a storytelling activity, it is important to remember these do not have to be true stories. www.nursenextdoor.com/blog/benefits-of-storytelling-for-dementia

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The Byron carer

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www.byronrespite.com.au

Byron Shire Respite Service is located at the Brunswick Valley Community Centre, South Beach Rd, Brunswick Heads.

Our incorporated non-government community based organisation is managed by a local committee and covers the shires of Byron, Ballina and Lismore.

NDIS Registered Provider

Respite care is delivered through our Flexible Respite, Day Respite and Social Support projects, with a person centred enablement approach across the respite continuum.

Telephone Karen on: 02) 6685 1619
or Emma on 02) 6685 1629

Website: www.byronrespite.com.au
Email: caremanager@byronrespite.com.au



Byron Shire Respite Service acknowledge and pay respect to the Arakwal people of the Bundjalung nation, the traditional owners of the land on which we live and care - and pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging.

Byron Shire Respite Service Inc. is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health.
Visit www.health.gov.au

Although funding for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) has been provided by the Australian Government, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government.

*If you require emergency respite care,
please call the Carer Gateway on:
1800 422 737*

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Some ways to begin...

- Tell or retell familiar stories such as how someone met their spouse or a favourite family holiday. The idea here is not to keep prompting someone to remember the events as they happened, but simply to retell the story in the hope that it will re-ignite a feeling of happiness that is associated with the story.
- It can be equally enjoyable to simply make up stories. Showing images such as a garden, a cat, look at a painting or share old photos, and ask simple questions such as "Where has the cat been?", "What's happening in this painting?" etc., can be a great way to start.
- Listening to nostalgic music can also ignite memories and imagination.

Ann Basting, founder of the TimeSlips project says, "Inevitably, storytelling is about memories, but it opens the rules to include imagination and to create something new that accepts who they [people living with dementia] are and where they are in the moment. That's a great thing for families."
www.recogneyes.co.uk/storytelling-dementia.

Daughters Caring for Mothers

The relationship between a mother and daughter is often significantly and unexpectedly impacted following the mother's diagnosis of dementia. Dementia Australia is offering an online program running over 4 weeks in July. This pilot program is designed for daughters to understand and explore this impact. Unfortunately, this program is now fully booked. It is likely that Dementia Australia will run this program again in the future, so if you are interested, please email christinedebrenni@byronrespite.com.au. Christine will pass expressions of interest on to Dementia Australia and keep you informed about this particular program. If you are a daughter caring for your mother, you are invited to share a brief story of this relationship, to dementiafriendly@byronrespite.com.au

Need support?

- **Carer Gateway** telephone: 1800 422 737 for information about planned & emergency respite & other carer supports. www.carergateway.gov.au
- **Australian Government Department of Health** For more information about COVID-19 call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 or www.health.gov.au
- **My Aged Care** telephone: 1800 200 422 for information about the Australian Government's aged care system and services. www.myagedcare.gov.au
- **Telephone Karen or Emma at Byron Shire Respite Service to discuss your role as a carer.** telephone: 02) 6685 1619
- **National Dementia Helpline** telephone: 1800 100 500
- **Carers Counselling Service** telephone: 02) 6628 6416
- **Carers NSW** telephone: 1800 242 636
- **Sandra Kimball Counselling** telephone: 0458 175 962
- **NSW Elder Abuse Helpline** telephone: 1800 628 221

Aids:

- **National Continence Helpline** telephone: 1800 330 066
- **Byron Ballina Home Maintenance and Modification Service 1/65 Centennial Circuit, Byron Bay** telephone: 02) 6685 7312
- **Lismore Home Maintenance and Modification Service 43 Habib Dr, South Lismore** telephone: 02) 6622 2323
- **Bright Sky Cards for Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS)** telephone: 1300 886 601

Need Transport?

- **Byron Shire Respite Service** can assist with transport to medical appointments. Telephone Emma or Karen on: 02) 6685 1629
- **Byron Shire Limousines** telephone: 02) 6685 5008 Travel for medical appointments free with travel voucher or for Veteran and Widow Gold Card holders
- **Brunswick Limousines** telephone David on: 0412 855 747
- **Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport** telephone: 1300 875 895
Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport provide transport to medical appointments, weekly & fortnightly shopping outings & monthly social outings. The service is funded to support older people living at home independently or have a permanent disability or Indigenous Australians aged over 50 years. Phone Kathryn in the Byron office on: 1300 875 895 for transport to medical appointments or any shopping bus or social bus enquiries.



A Care Worker shares her story about reading to a client

As a care worker I spend time with Sally (real name change to protect privacy), who before her diagnosis of dementia was an avid reader. Sally really enjoys being read to. So, we find a quiet comfortable place; the local library, a bench overlooking the sea, perhaps sitting in chairs under a shady tree or if the weather is miserable, keeping warm and dry in my parked car.

I have been reading from a book about a woman from the USA who travels to Italy to find her family roots. Each chapter tells a story about a place, a person or an experience. Sally and I find ourselves laughing and crying as I read. Sometimes some aspect of the novel will spark a memory for Sally so we alternate between me reading and Sally sharing her story with me.

I have also shared a couple of picture books with Sally. Picture books usually have many beautiful illustrations with a few words. Picture books might be thought of as children's books but the well written and illustrated ones are far from childish. As Sally commented, "They can be read and understood on many levels." The pictures can also be used to stimulate the imagination and so together we make up our own stories. We add gestures, movements and try different voices. It is so much fun.

We find the time passes too quickly as we both thoroughly enjoy this experience and our time together.

Life Story Work – another service our care/ support workers offer

A Life-Story/ Photo Book project is based upon building connections with our clients through sharing stories and then documenting their unique story. These stories can then be shared with other family members or friends and passed down through the generations.

As a carer, if you think your loved one would like to be involved in creating a Life-Story or Photo Book, speak to a respite worker or contact the Byron Shire Respite Service Care Office directly. Phone: 02 6685 1619 or 02 6685 1629.

Ways in which carers can share their stories

As a carer you will have your own story about your unique caring role. While no two situations are the same it can help to share your story with other carers. There are a number of ways in which you can do this.

One is to register with **Carer Gateway** and join a Peer Support Group.

Carer Gateway can help you to meet people who also care for a family member or friend. By sharing stories, knowledge and experience, you can learn from and support each other.

Carer Gateway offers two options to connect with other carers:

- **In-person peer support groups** – meet with others in your local area who also care for a family member or friend.

To find out more about the in-person peer support groups available near you, call Carer Gateway on 1800 422 737, Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm and select option 1 to speak with your local Carer Gateway service provider. They will register you with Carer Gateway and start the planning process.

- **Online community forum** – join the online written discussions to engage with other people who also care for a family member or friend.

To find out more about the forum and join click on the link below.

www.carergateway.gov.au/about/peer-support-groups?cta

Another way is to join the Coffee Club.

Carers Coffee Club

If you are caring for someone with dementia and would like an opportunity to meet with other carers and share your stories - we'd love to see you at our monthly Carers Coffee Club on the 3rd Wednesday of every month in Brunswick Heads. **The next meeting is Wednesday 20th of July.**

If you are interested in joining us, please email Emma on: emmawhite@byronrespite.com.au or telephone **02) 6685 1629** for more information.

Home fire safety

House fires can happen at any time of the year, but we need to be especially aware during the winter months. The key to preventing and/ or surviving a house fire is being prepared.

There are some simple steps you can follow to reduce your risk of a fire in your home. Most importantly, have an adequate number of suitable smoke alarms installed throughout your home and make sure that you test them regularly. Change the battery at least once every 12 months. A few other measures include:

- Never, ever leave cooking, especially the chips in the deep fryer, unattended.
- Check electric blankets for damage or frayed cords before placing on the bed.
- Take care to keep curtains, tablecloths, and bedding away from portable heaters.
- Keep wet clothing at least 1 metre from heaters or fireplaces and never leave unattended.
- Always extinguish candles or any other open flames before going to bed. Never leave candles or any other open flames unattended.

To download a comprehensive **WINTER FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST**, click on the link

www.fire.nsw.gov.au/gallery/files/pdf/community/Get%20Ready%20For%20Winter%20Checklist.pdf

You can also watch our firefighters as they walk you through a winter fire safety check of a home by going to the NSW Fire + Rescue website. www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=9284

You can also book a Home Safety Visit by calling your closest fire station.

What is a Safety Visit?

During your Safety Visit, a firefighter will attend your home and check that you have working smoke alarms, that they are in good working condition, and are installed in suitable areas. If you do not have one, firefighters will install a long-life battery-powered smoke alarm as well as replace existing smoke alarm batteries all at no cost. With your permission, firefighters will also ask you to show us around your home and property. This will allow us to give you personalised fire safety information including, but not limited to:

- Cooking fire safety
- Heaters and open fires
- Common electrical safety
- Bedroom heating and wheat bags

Firefighters will also provide advice on a fire escape plan in the event of a fire occurring in your home and how to call Triple Zero (000) to report emergencies.

Who might benefit from a Safety Visit?

Everyone can benefit from a Safety Visit, however there are people within our communities that are statistically at higher risk of incidents occurring, including:



- Over 65's.
- Those who live alone.
- People with limited mobility, hearing impairments or vision impairments.
- Residents who are supported by carers, family and friends.
- Anyone with English as a second language.



2022 Byron Shire Respite Service – Day Program Timetable

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm centre-based activities for older people	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>
		10am – 3pm Fortnightly Bus Outings & shopping days		

Lunch, morning and afternoon tea is provided.

The cost for the day for CHSP clients, including transport is \$30.00 (Fees subject to change).

For more information, please telephone: 02) 6685 1629 or email: caremanager@byronrespite.com.au