

Knitted fiddle muffs for people with dementia

Activities for people with dementia that include sensory experiences such as pleasurable smells and textured fabrics may help engage the person and enhance their experience.

Knitted hand muffs with sewn in fiddle items help keep older hands warm, and quirky adornments such as buttons, ribbons, beads keep their owners occupied and can help trigger memories. Fiddle muffs are also great for people with dementia who might have a little bit of anxiety, or prone to scratching their skin or picking themselves.

Sally (pictured) is volunteering her time by knitting up a storm for the upcoming Care of Hospitalised Older persons (CHOPs) program at Byron Central Hospital and other people living with dementia in the community. If you would like to help knit some fiddle muffs, please email Skye for more information on dementiafriendly@byronrespite.com.au or contact us at the centre.



Attending Commonwealth Home Support Program social support groups and other group activities

Back in March this year, the Department of Health cancelled all Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) in-person group activities. This occurred to help protect vulnerable people from COVID-19. Since then, a number of regions have started to ease restrictions. The way restrictions are easing is different in each state and territory and amongst different providers.

Byron Shire Respite Service is a CHSP provider and follows the guidelines, advice and restrictions of the NSW government and its Centre-based programs are re-opening on limited days. All workers and clients receiving service and attending programs must continue to maintain physical distancing and infection control measures. As a provider of CHSP services, this service also has a COVIDSafe plan for the work place and service delivery model.

If you ceased some of your social support activities due to COVID-19 and you would like your services to resume, please contact the centre.

If you feel lonely or concerned about your or a friend's mental health:

The Australian Government understands CHSP clients may experience loneliness or concern during the pandemic. *continued overleaf* ►



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 Janine on:
02) 6685 1629**

Website: www.byronrespite.com.au

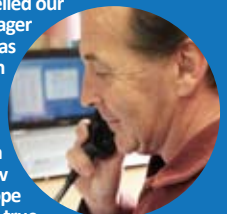
Email: service@byronrespite.com.au



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.

Happy retirement Colin

This week we farewelled our long-standing Service Manager Colin Munro. Colin was instrumental in forming Byron Shire Respite Service in 1991 and over the years, 100s of staff and clients have enjoyed working with him. We wish him happiness in this new phase of his life and hope all his hopes and plans come true.



◀ Continued from overleaf

This might be because you are unable to participate in your preferred social and recreational activities at the moment.

Support available:

- The Head to Health website supports people to cope with anxiety or worry about COVID-19.
- Digital resources and a phone counselling service are led by Beyond Blue (1300 224 636). Accredited mental health professionals are available 24 hours, seven days a week.
- Extra funding is available for phone and online support services, including Lifeline (13 11 14), to meet demand. To find out more about mental health supports visit the Department's website.
- CHSP service providers are developing new service delivery models to help clients keep socially connected.

To maintain physical distancing this could be:

Internet or phone-based welfare checks, or Online social group activities such as regular zoom group music therapy sessions held by Byron Shire Respite Service.

For more information, visit: <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/06/covid-19-and-the-commonwealth-home-support-programme-information-for-clients-families-and-carers-covid-19-and-the-chsp-information-for-clients-families-and-carers.pdf>

Hotline for older Australians during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia, National Seniors Australia, Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) and Dementia Australia have banded together, supported by the Commonwealth Government, to create the Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line.

If you have questions about the pandemic or would like information on the up-to-date guidelines, call 1800 171 866 to speak to friendly, specially trained staff from a senior's advocacy organisation.

BYRON SHIRE RESPITE SERVICE

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

Our Vision Statement:

With a focus on caring wellness and reablement provide person centred support to people with diverse needs to enhance their quality of life and maintain a familiar lifestyle in the community and in their own homes.



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.

Where carers can find support

Do you look after a family member or friend with disability, a medical condition, mental illness or who is frail due to age? Do your caring responsibilities affect your wellbeing or your ability to work, study or socialise? If you answered yes to any of these questions, Carer Gateway can help you.

What is Carer Gateway?

Carer Gateway provides in-person, phone and online services and support to Australia's 2.65 million unpaid carers. By calling 1800 422 737 Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm, you can talk to a Carer Gateway service provider who will help you access services and support.

The dedicated Carer Gateway website (carergateway.gov.au) connects you with online support and information. Services available through Carer Gateway include:

Coaching

Reflect on how your caring role impacts your life and learn new ways to manage stress and improve your wellbeing.

- Self-guided coaching – undertake online interactive courses.

Counselling

If you're feeling stressed, anxious, sad or frustrated, a professional counsellor can talk with you about your worries and offer help.

- In-person – speak one-on-one with a professional counsellor in your local area.

- Phone counselling – speak with a counsellor over the phone in the comfort of your own home.

Respite care

- Emergency respite – get assistance in looking after the person you care for if an unplanned event stops you from being able to provide care. For example if you are ill or injured.
- Planned respite – plan for regular breaks to rest and recharge while respite services look after the person you care for.

Connect with other carers

Meet with people in similar caring situations and share your stories, knowledge and experience.

- In-person – meet local carers, share advice and learn from each other in a safe space.
- Online forum – a supportive community with other carers.

Online skills courses

Learn new skills in caring for someone and your own wellbeing, including dealing with stress and legal issues.

Financial support

Get financial support to assist you in your caring role.

Financial support packages:

- one-off practical support in the form of equipment or an item to assist you in your caring role.
- a range of ongoing practical supports, such as planned respite or transport, provided over a twelve-month period.

How do I contact Carer Gateway?

Carer Gateway offers a national website at www.carergateway.gov.au or you can phone 1800 422 737 Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm.

carergateway.gov.au

Connecting carers ●●●● to support services



An Australian Government Initiative



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

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

- **Telephone Janine 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

- **National Continence Helpline** telephone: 1800 330 066

- **NSW Elder Abuse Helpline** telephone: 1800 628 221

Aids:

- **Byron Ballina Home Maintenance and Modification Service 1/65 Centennial Circuit, Byron Bay** telephone: (02) 6685 7312

- **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 Janine: (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 Amanda for any shopping bus or social bus enquiries.

Hallucinations and false ideas

People with dementia sometimes experience a range of conditions in which they do not experience things as they really are. This is caused by a brain condition and the person is not always able to control their behaviour. Although hallucinations and delusions are imaginary, they seem very real to the person experiencing them and can cause extreme anxiety, and even panic.

Hallucinations are sensory experiences that cannot be verified by anyone other than the person experiencing them. They may include any of the senses, but most common are visual and auditory.

Hallucinations are something that the person sees or hears that is not there. Voices may be heard, people may be seen who are not present, or strange and frightening noises may be heard.

Paranoia is characterised by unrealistic beliefs, usually of either persecution or grandeur. People with dementia may believe that others are out to get them, or that they have superhuman powers. People sometimes become quite suspicious, accusing others of stealing things and start hoarding or hiding things.

Where to begin

Discuss with your doctor concerns about behaviour changes, and their impact on you. Arrange for a medical check-up of your loved-one to eliminate the presence of other physical or psychiatric problems and effects of medication. The doctor can also arrange for referrals to the Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT) or for specialised psychiatric assessment.

Treatment

Medication will sometimes help control delusions or hallucinations and occasionally will help control misidentification syndromes and a trial of a drug treatment may be appropriate. However, many of the anti-psychotic medications used to treat these disorders have side effects such as stiffness, shakiness or drowsiness.

The Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (DBMAS) is a national telephone advisory service for families, carers and care workers provides confidential advice, assessment, intervention, education and specialised support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can be contacted on 1800 699 799.

A common accusation is that the person's partner is being unfaithful, which may lead to them becoming fearful and resistant to care.

Delusions are ideas that are not based on reality, but which are thought to be true by the person with dementia. Their content can often be centred on people stealing money or other possessions, or about people intending to harm them.

Misidentification occurs when people misidentify other people or themselves. They may not recognise their partner or may think their reflection in the mirror is another person and be frightened. They may think voices on the radio or television are from people in the same room.

Causes

Dementia may cause the person to lose the ability to recognise things as the brain doesn't accurately interpret information that it has received. Problems with memory may lead to suspiciousness, paranoia and false ideas.

Factors which may cause behaviors to change:

- Sensory defects such as poor eyesight or poor hearing
- Misinterpretation of environmental cues often as a result of forgetting to use a hearing aid or glasses
- Side effects of some medications
- Psychiatric illness
- Unfamiliar environments
- Inadequate lighting
- Physical conditions such as infections, fever, pain, constipation, malnutrition, dehydration
- Unfamiliar caregivers
- Disruption of familiar routines
- Sensory overload because of too many things going on at once.

What to try

- Remain quiet or neutral. Acknowledge that the person may be frightened by the delusions and hallucinations
- If a person appears to be losing objects or hiding things, suggest you both search
- Check suspicions for accuracy
- Distract the person with music, exercise, conversation or looking at old photos
- Respond to the underlying feelings which may be at the bottom of the statements which the person makes
- Physical contact may be reassuring, if the person is willing to accept this
- Maintain a familiar environment, and if relocating, take some familiar things from the previous residence
- Increase lighting in the home and use night lights
- Maintain consistent caregivers and a consistent routine
- Learn common hiding places
- Keeping a diary may help to establish whether these behaviours occur at particular times of the day or with particular people. Identifying such causes may help you to be able to make changes to overcome the difficulties
- If possible, keep a spare set of things often mislaid such as keys, purse or glasses
- Some hallucinations and false ideas can be ignored if they are harmless and do not cause the person to become agitated.

To view the original transcript of this article, visit: <https://www.dementia.org.au/files/helpsheets>

Dealing with these behaviours day in and day out is not easy. As a carer, it is essential that you seek support for yourself from an understanding family member, a friend, a professional or a support group.

Remember: Feelings of distress, frustration, guilt, exhaustion and exasperation are quite normal.