

CareSearch is a website that has been developed to help patients and their families find quality information about palliative care. Pages can be downloaded or printed to read later. You can find these pages at [www.caresearch.com.au](http://www.caresearch.com.au) in the Patient-Family section.



## GROUPS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS AT THE END OF LIFE BROCHURE SERIES: 5

### Further information:

CareSearch is an online resource funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to help patients and their families find helpful information about palliative care. There are over 600 pages in the website and over 100 have been written specifically for patients, family members and others in the community. These pages include links to other quality web resources and provide information on state and national services and organisations.

It is free to use and available now at  
[www.caresearch.com.au](http://www.caresearch.com.au)



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Australia is made up of people with many different backgrounds. One in four Australians were born overseas. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders make up 2.4% of Australia's population and 1.5% of Australians are 85 years or older.

Not all groups have equal or easy access to resources and services that provide support at the end of life. There may also be particular issues that health professionals need to be aware of when providing care. Some of these issues for different groups with specific needs are described.

### **INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED**

The life expectancy of people with a learning disability has increased. This means that many are living into old age with diseases such as cancer or dementia. Those with an intellectual disability may not easily understand issues around death and dying. Careful explanation is therefore needed.

### **INDIGENOUS**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are likely to need support from the Indigenous community and from health services. A general practitioner or doctor working with an Aboriginal community-controlled health service can assist in access to palliative care. While people may need to travel to receive some treatment, there should be ongoing discussions about where care could be provided.

### **MULTICULTURAL**

Different cultural groups can have different beliefs and attitudes about care at the end of life. Appropriate communication needs to take into account the preferred language of the patient and family. This can help in understanding their wishes with regard to treatments, ongoing care, and customs surrounding death, burial or cremation and bereavement.

### **YOUNG CARERS**

Young people can sometimes be given a lot of responsibility for their age (eg, responsible for medication or physical and personal care). They can suffer great emotional distress if they do not

have people who support them and respect their efforts in caring. Various groups such as carer associations, school counsellors and social workers can provide help.

### **THOSE WITH DEMENTIA**

Many people with dementia will often also have other illnesses such as heart disease or a stroke. They may die from that disease and not the dementia. Patients in the later stages of dementia may no longer be able to communicate their wishes. Discussions around decision making and advance care planning will be very important.

You can find out more about these and other groups with specific needs and helpful resources on the CareSearch website.

