

palliAGED Practice Tip Sheets: Enabling aged care nurses and careworkers



Practice Tips for Careworkers



Practice Tips for Nurses

Nurses and personal careworkers provide direct care to millions of older Australians. To support them in caring for older people approaching the end of life, palliAGED has developed a series of practical tip sheets focusing on commonly encountered issues.

Quality care for our elderly, especially those at the end of life, is a goal shared by everyone in the palliative and aged care communities.

Nurses and personal careworkers comprise 95% of our aged care workforce. [1] They provide direct care to millions of older Australians in residential aged care, at home and in community based care.

Older people will commonly have co-morbidities. Nurses and careworkers will increasingly provide care in the areas of palliative care, dementia, wound management and mental health. [1]

Providing end-of-life care for the elderly is a complex responsibility and task. Among other things, it requires the person providing it to understand and recognise the most common care issues expected when someone has a life-limiting illness or is approaching the end of life.

Planning and working as a team - as well as taking time to reflect, review and continuously improve practices - are also crucial.

To be useful, resources need to be fit for purpose. They need to be trustworthy and based on evidence. They need to recognise that the knowledge, skills and scope of practice are different for careworkers and for nurses. And they need to be practical and helpful for busy staff.

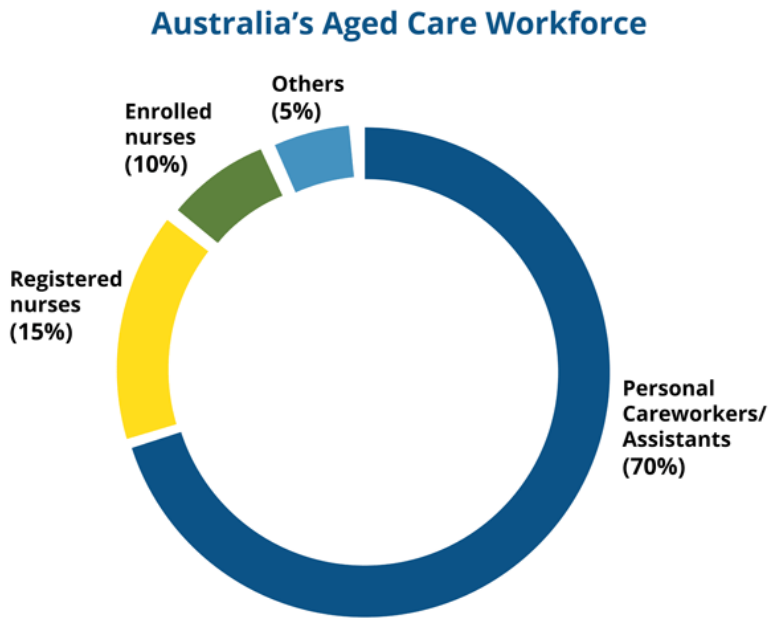
The new palliAGED Practice Tip Sheets are the latest addition to our suite of evidence-based and free resources. Both sets of Nurse and Careworker Practice Tips Sheets aim to support and improve care for older Australians.

The Practice Tips Sheets are also valuable for training and professional development in aged care. It can be used for independent learning, in house or team training, or as an additional resource for educators.

- **References**

1. Mavromaras K, Knight G, Isherwood L, Crettenden A, Flavel J Karmel T, et al. 2016 National Aged Care Workforce Census and Survey - The Aged Care Workforce, 2016 (24.06MB pdf). Canberra: Australian Government Department of Health. 2017.

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Personal careworkers or assistants and nurses form the majority of our aged care workforce.

Source: Department of Health 2016 National Aged Care Workforce Census and Survey – The Aged Care Workforce, 2016.

Areas of training identified as most needed for residential direct care workforce.

Training area	Registered Nurses	Enrolled Nurses	Personal Careworkers/ Assistants	Aged care facilities' training requirements for Personal Careworkers/ Assistants
Dementia	51.3	54.9	63.3	92.7
Palliative care	45.9	58.2	52.0	72.4
Management & leadership training	50.2	27.8	17.5	13.7
Wound management	38.9	57.0	29.3	44.4
Mental health	21.0	31.2	32.9	28.8
Allied health	4.3	4.9	9.0	9.1
Other	6.1	4.3	5.0	15.0

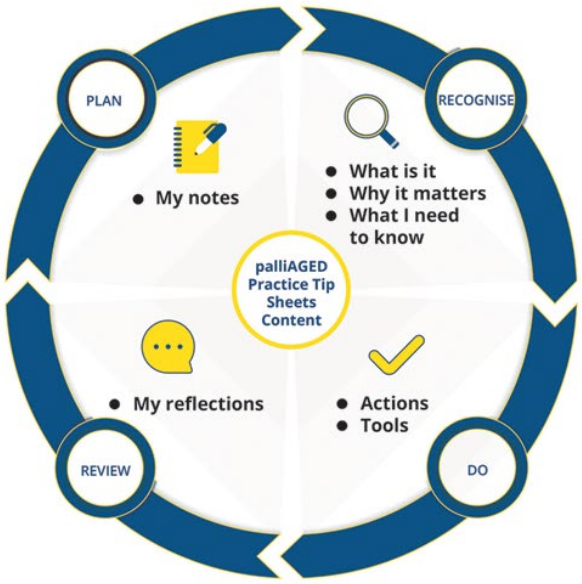
Dementia, palliative care, wound management and mental health were the top areas of training needed as identified by nurses, careworkers and facilities. Source: 2016 National Aged Care Workforce Census and Survey – The Aged Care Workforce, 2016, page 31

*"If the Australian aged care industry has to transform - to reframe the notion of caring and reorient care strongly around 'enhancing life' of older people - the **personal care worker** roles must be the key drivers of this change."*

- Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce Report, page 28

*"The distinct specialist contribution of **nursing** in aged care settings, including the roles played in clinical care, and the growing importance of cognitive and functional health as part of an aged care scope of practice, need to be fully recognised."*

- Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce Report, page 28



palliAGED Practice Tip Sheets can aid in team learning and planning.