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Christian Social Services

Let Us Look After Each Other

Aroha tētahi ki tētahi



Together We Can Respond to Dementia: Future Service Needs.

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RESPONDING TO DEMENTIA AND WAREWARE MATE: FACING RESPONSIBILITIES AND CARE





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Recommendations

- **Relationality & Culture:** spirituality, relationality, culture and community development
- **Create a genuine continuum of services:** dementia-specific home support, flexible and accessible respite, adequate and timely access to residential care, supported living options
- **Resources for the task:** models of funding that are flexible & responsive, workforce training responsibility shared
- **Strategy:** public de-stigmatise campaign, co-ordinate services and an overarching strategy that guides future planning
- **Research:** evaluate effectiveness of day programmes & dementia specific home support, tangata whenua led research into mate wareware, supported living, impact of social participation



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Relationality & Culture

- Spirituality: it is not an optional extra! Simple yet often demanding and challenging expressions of care resonate with spiritual symbolism. Challenges the values systems of our individualistic and rationalistic society/
- Relationality: long course of the dementia, challenges our understanding of personhood, importance of knowing the person's story and history as communication becomes more difficult.
- Culture: exponential growth among older Asian, Pacific as well as Maori living with dementia means that future services must be shaped by those cultures.
- Community development: build services out of the resources and networks of their own communities.



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A Genuine continuum of services

- dementia-specific home support: there is a need to specialise in home support services tailored to needs of people with dementia (SupportLink)
- flexible and accessible respite: “there is almost always a second patient... it affects others who in turn influence the manifestations of dementia”
- Day programmes are the vital link the in continuum – “this day centre keeps many of these people at home for two years longer than if they weren’t coming here”
- adequate and timely access to residential care: culturally based units are needed to meet the growing diversity of older people with dementia
- supported living options: Swedish village cooperative, intergenerational housing



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Resources for the task

- models of funding that are flexible & responsive: the prospect of limited additional public funding for services gives more urgency to the calls to implement more widely flexible funding models.
- workforce training responsibility shared: service providers struggle to resource training when the current funding arrangements do not acknowledge the costs of this. Informal as well as paid carers need training – shortages of skilled paid carers and practitioners will continue and resources have to be found to reduce the shortages and help train the informal carers who are left to cover the gaps.
- New models of training such as “Walking in Another’s Shoes” and Spark of Life may help?



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Strategy

- public de-stigmatise campaign: “my wife is not mad... Sarah is ill and she needs to be cared for properly”. Is the language of epidemic really helpful? Dementia is not contagious!
- co-ordinate services: a constant plea in most service areas. What kind of coordination is most valuable? ElderCare Canterbury as a model?
- overarching strategy that guides future planning: Do we need another strategy? How successful have current strategies been? Yet without the attempt to develop a strategy how can we possibly work together nationally and regionally towards some shared goals? So let’s get on and start joining the dots!



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Research

- evaluate effectiveness of day programmes & dementia specific home support: the call for investment in day programmes needs research to identify the kinds of service that work best
- tangata whenua led research into mate wareware – older Maori feel alienated from most current forms of service provision yet this study identified the strengths of maori tikanga in integrating older people with dementia.
- supported living: an open book in the NZ context
- impact of social participation: can it delay the onset of dementia or its severity?



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Conclusion

This NZCCSS study *Together We Can Respond to Dementia* shows the depth of compassion and aroha that is needed in our society if we are to meet the future needs families and whānau living with dementia/mate wareware. From community level through to national social policy and political levels, our message is that “together we can” meet those needs – when we understand, collaborate and communicate to best use all our available resources. The work has already begun, so let us show love and care for each other *aroha tētahi ki tētahi*.

The report is online for download at:
www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz

