

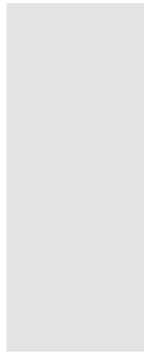
# WA HACC Program Wellness Approach at Work

## Sharing Client Stories

ability



confidence



wellbeing



value



home and community care

A JOINT COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY PROGRAM  
PROVIDING FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE FOR AUSTRALIANS IN NEED



CommunityWest  
Advancing Community Services

# opportunities

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# WA HACCC Program Wellness Approach at Work

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## Sharing Client Stories

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“Wellness  
is about  
thinking and  
working in a way  
that builds our  
clients’ capacity  
to live as  
independently  
as possible.”

WA HACC Support Worker

# Sharing Client Stories

Over a number of years there has been a general expectation that the support provided by the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program was focussed on doing things for clients rather than partnering with them to:

- regain and/or retain their independence
- adapt to their changing health and ability levels; or
- learn new skills.

In March 2006, the West Australian HACC Program adopted a Wellness Approach as the policy basis for the future delivery of HACC services across the state. The implementation of the Wellness Approach, developed in partnership with CommunityWest, has challenged the traditional approach to service delivery and has commenced a fundamental shift towards an alternative way of thinking and working.

The WA HACC Program Wellness Approach asserts that people who are frail or have a disability have the capacity to make gains in their physical, social and emotional wellbeing and can continue to live independently in the community, if positively supported to do so. The approach:

- looks at people's needs in a holistic way, considering their strengths and abilities as well as difficulties experienced.
- involves people in setting their own goals and making decisions about the support they receive.
- ensures that support delivered is in partnership with the client and does not take over activities they can do for themselves.
- recognises that people's needs fluctuate over time and there are often significant opportunities for improving capacity with the right support at the right time.
- highlights the importance of social and community connections.

The following true stories illustrate how changing the way we work, often in very simplistic ways, can build on an individual's strengths and abilities and can have a positive impact on their independence, wellbeing and quality of life.

Hilary O'Connell  
Manager Sector Development  
CommunityWest

Paula Gevers  
Manager Community Services  
Aged and Continuing Care Directorate  
WA Department of Health



*“My children feel a lot more at ease now that I use the shower chair.”*

*Maxine*

## Maxine Showers with Confidence

Maxine feared that she would fall in the shower. Initially she could not shower without assistance because she would not let go of the grab rails, yet was reluctant to use the shower chair for fear of being seen as ‘old’ and being sent to a nursing home.

After some gentle persuasion, Maxine was coaxed into trying the shower chair.

Rather than feeling that she was a burden on her family, Maxine has gained the independence of showering herself from top to toe.

With her regained confidence, Maxine is eager to explore other suggestions to help in her everyday living.

## Client self perception from a Wellness perspective

Many older people, like Maxine, fiercely cling to their independence but they fear that the system and their families see them as incapable.

By recognising Maxine’s concerns, staff were able to present new ideas and strategies that supported Maxine to be independent in her personal care.

An assessment using a Wellness Approach takes physical and environmental factors into consideration but never neglects to consider the aspirations and determination of the client.

*“I knew I could do it. I just needed someone to show me how to get there.”*

*John*



## Not Letting a Fall Keep Him Down

John had recently experienced a fall. Although he sustained no injuries, he was lacking the confidence to shower himself independently.

John's situation was assessed using the Wellness Approach. The assessment identified that John was independent in other areas of his life and was strongly motivated to regain independence in his personal care.

John's support plan was developed directing staff to use specific strategies with him, such as how to step safely in and out of the shower, to build his capacity and confidence in showering.

After 12 visits over four weeks, John is now confident to shower independently. Services were withdrawn and he was referred to a physiotherapist for a mobility review and falls prevention education.

### Regaining confidence after a fall

Fear of falling and lack of confidence after a fall are common reasons that result in people losing their independence with everyday activities.

Constant encouragement can assist someone to resume their activities and can build their self confidence after a fall.

Education, assistive equipment and practice may also reduce the risk of falls in the future.



*“I never thought I’d be able to cook. Now I can make dishes like my wife used to make.”*

*Stan*

## Meals on Wheels to Master of the Kitchen

A wellness focussed assessment identified a client who was receiving Meals on Wheels (MOW) simply because he had never learned to cook. Stan’s oven had not been used since his wife died.

During assessment it was determined that Stan could get to the shops and operate the oven and stove top. He just needed help to learn the basics of cooking and how to create a list of ingredients.

After four lessons with a Support Worker, Stan has learned to make several types of soup, roast chicken with vegetables and custard for dessert. He has now set his sights on casseroles and stews for winter.

The one-on-one lessons provided Stan with an opportunity to learn something new towards achieving his goal of cooking for himself.

## Meal preparation from a Wellness perspective

Stan has gone from having MOW to actively participating in preparing his own meals.

Stan now assesses his pantry, chooses meals, commutes to the shops, buys and unpacks the food, prepares the meal and cleans up the kitchen.

Each step in Stan’s new cooking regime has contributed to his physical and mental wellbeing, and given him a sense of purpose, control and independence in his daily life.

*“We can’t believe mum is doing this artwork – she’s finally taken time out for herself.”*

*Leon*



## Dulcie Learns a New Skill

Dulcie is physically very frail from years of hard work, has a bad hip and uses a frame. But she is very proud, “Nothing wrong with me” she insists. She had never been to school or had any experience with picking up a pencil, so when she came to the centre her artwork was childlike and undeveloped.

The staff at the centre began very slowly to help Dulcie improve her dexterity, giving her some simple things to colour in so she would get used to holding a pencil. Then, when she was more confident, they gave her scissors and some cutting out activities. Now she is making her own designs and creating her own images.

The development of these new skills and her involvement at the centre has greatly improved her confidence. Having led a very private life with mainly close family, she is now able to sit with a group of other ladies, talk about the old days and tell stories. She even brought a picture to share of an old shanty where she lived and is using it as an inspiration for her artwork.

## Self confidence helps to connect with others

Lack of opportunities in Dulcie’s early life had a lifelong impact on her work choices, social opportunities and ultimately, on her physical wellbeing and self confidence.

Providing an opportunity to develop a new skill has increased Dulcie’s self confidence and given her a new way to connect with others.



*“It’s been tough but not as tough as I thought it would be.”*

*Jack*

## A Multi-disciplinary Approach Helps Jack

Jack has lived with mental illness from a young age. His fears, obsessive thoughts and obesity have kept him confined to his house. Jack wanted to go out but had difficulty with public transport.

A joint Support Plan involving a General Practitioner, his HACC Support Worker, an Outreach Support Worker and his Psychiatrist was developed with Jack identifying steps toward achieving his goal of going out more.

The multi-disciplinary team has assisted Jack to achieve his goal and to participate in life to his full potential.

Jack has taken responsibility to re-engage with the outside world. And his mum gets a well deserved rest!

## Mental health partnerships for recovery

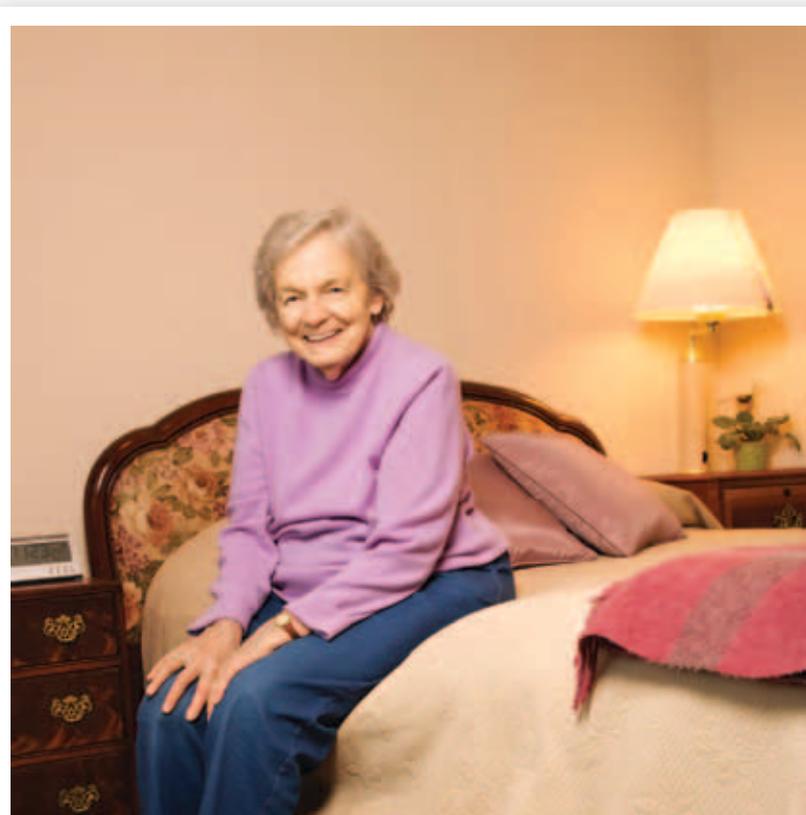
A team approach to community mental health proved to be an effective way of supporting Jack.

By first identifying what was important to Jack, the team could effectively plan the steps and supports needed to reach his goals.

The team approach has enabled Jack to achieve his goal of going out more and engaging with the community while continuing to receive mental health support.

*"I am amazed at the improvement in Helen. Today she made a cuppa."*

*Bob*



## Praise and Encouragement Work Wonders

Helen was referred for shower assistance three times a week and in-home respite for her husband, Bob.

Helen has dementia. Although she was quite mobile, she rarely spoke so Bob spoke on Helen's behalf during her assessment. The wellness focussed assessment identified that Bob would choose Helen's clothes, undress her, assist with ninety per cent of her personal care and then fully assist with dressing again. Bob was finding the process increasingly stressful.

Over time using a Wellness Approach, Helen was supported and encouraged by her husband and Support Worker to complete more personal care tasks. Although Helen will need ongoing support, she is now choosing her own clothing and showering herself while being verbally prompted.

Helen has continued to improve and has found a new sense of dignity in her appearance. Verbal prompts, praise and encouragement have replaced physical assistance.

### Caring for a person with dementia

When caring for someone with dementia, retaining routines and skills in everyday activities is critical. Once lost, it is harder to regain.

Carers who encourage participation in everyday activities, rather than physical assistance, may experience less stress and fatigue themselves.

For the person with dementia, this active involvement and participation can improve their self esteem, engagement and orientation.



*“Thanks for helping me to get it together and start getting out more.”*

*Dan*

## Dan finds his Way Back

As a result of mental health issues, Dan had isolated himself to the point where he would shut himself in his room when Julie, his Support Worker, visited. As his isolation persisted, he was in danger of losing his independence in other areas. Dan showed no interest in his personal care, diet or managing his diabetes.

Using a Wellness Approach, Dan was helped to see the benefit of setting small goals.

Over time these goals have led Dan to take a more active role in his own care. He now works with Julie to maintain the house as well as plan, prepare and freeze his own meals. They even have a laugh about some of the meals he chooses to cook.

These steps have improved both his psychological wellbeing and diabetes. Dan has now expressed a desire to reconnect with his local support group.

## Mental health – getting well and keeping well

By setting goals, people with mental health issues are able to focus their energy and build motivation.

A realistic long-term goal is broken down into short-term goals to guide the person on the sometimes daunting journey of recovery.

Goals which re-establish social activities and networks, which are commonly disrupted in episodes of poor mental health, are critical to a person’s sense of wellbeing.

*“Trying something new has helped me make friends and has introduced me to a new pastime.”*

*Anna*



## Small Things Make a Big Impact

Although English was not Anna’s first language, while attending the multicultural day centre she was introduced to word puzzles, which she enjoyed trying to solve. Anna would often pair with another client to tackle the challenge together.

Anna found the puzzles both interesting and motivating and asked to take more home. “New activities at the centre have helped me make friends, improved my English and helped me to occupy my time alone - it’s a great pastime!”

Sharing her successes with clients at the centre has encouraged her to attempt even more complex puzzles.

### Opportunities provided can create new pastimes

Loneliness and boredom can be experienced by elderly people who have lost loved ones or lost their role as a parent or partner.

By providing an opportunity for Anna to discover a new pastime, no matter how simple, it gave her a chance to succeed and build confidence.

Although Anna attended for a short time each week, experiences enjoyed at the day centre have had a lasting, positive impact outside of these times.



*"I felt useless before. I really feel better now that I am helping with the housework."*

*Maureen*

## Housework is Good for the Body and Soul

Maureen has osteoarthritis and had been receiving a domestic assistance service each week to do her housework and laundry.

A review assessment identified that, despite her arthritis, Maureen was capable of waist height dusting, wiping and vacuuming with a lightweight carpet sweeper. She was also able to wash her own dishes and help with the laundry when the Support Worker provided some assistance.

After two months of perseverance and encouragement, Maureen only needs assistance on a fortnightly basis.

More importantly, Maureen's confidence has increased due to increased activity and control of her home.

## Osteoarthritis does not mean you have to stop moving

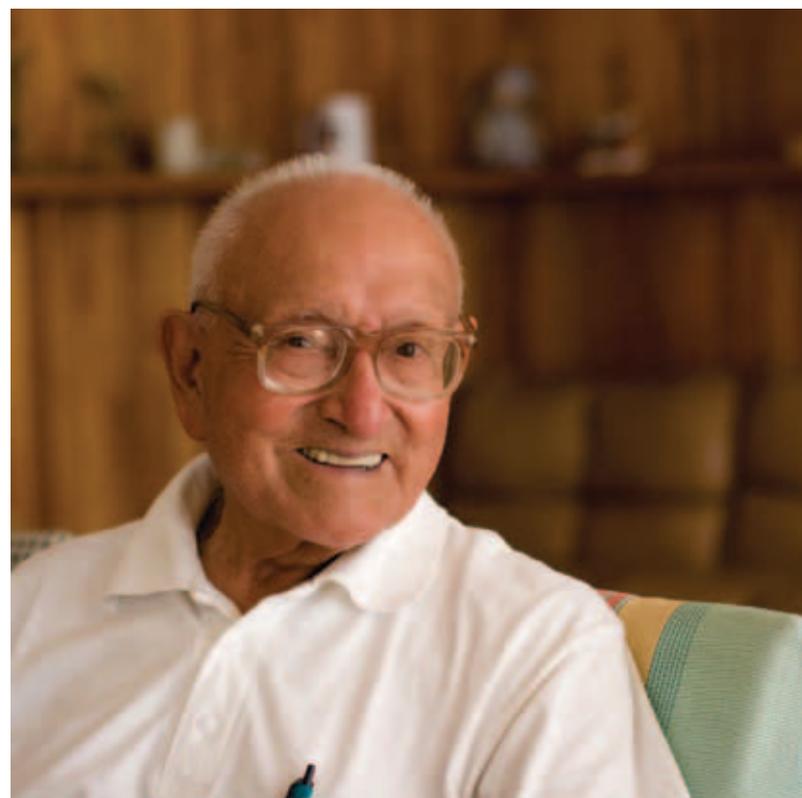
By encouraging Maureen to persevere with the lighter domestic tasks she is able to reclaim some independence, despite her arthritis.

Encouragement combined with the use of assistive equipment and an awareness to pace herself has allowed Maureen to do a lot more.

The result for Maureen is not only better joint mobility through the exercise of housework but also a better feeling about herself.

*“Being a bit more independent has helped both Kath and I.”*

*Tom*



## Tom gets Back on His Feet

Katherine has been the main carer for her husband, Tom, for some years. However, her health is now deteriorating and she has requested help with showering Tom, as well as some domestic assistance.

Rather than responding with personal care assistance three times a week and fortnightly domestic assistance, a Wellness Approach was used.

A flexible support plan was put in place to support goals that would allow Tom first to stand and then to walk into the shower making both his and Katherine's lives easier.

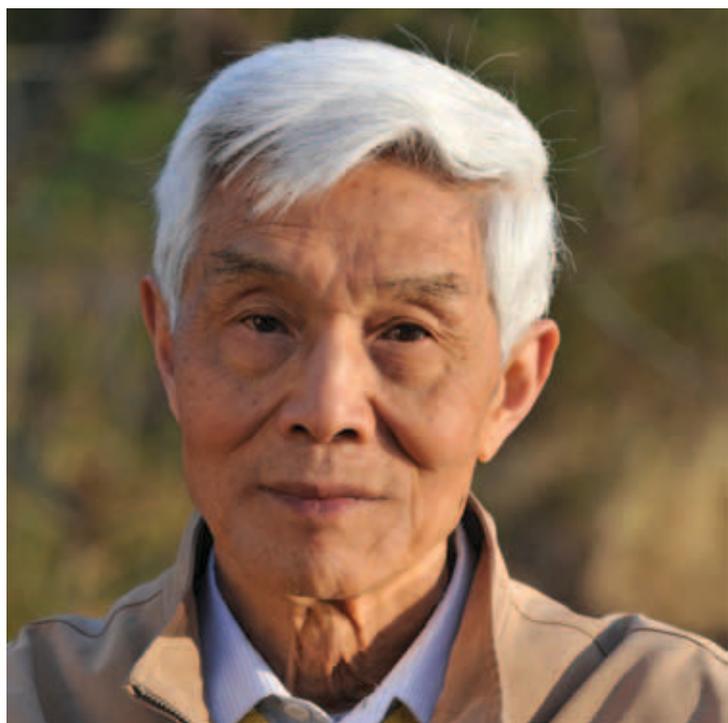
The Support Worker and Physiotherapist are working closely with Tom to make him as self sufficient as possible with his personal care.

## The broader impact from a Wellness perspective

This story is not just about Tom. Katherine needed Tom to reclaim some of his independence so she could maintain her own health.

A wellness focussed assessment takes into account the bigger picture when developing support plans for clients, achieving maximum gains for both them and their families.

Together the couple have achieved a higher quality of life.



*“Mum and Dad are coping much better with this little bit of help.”*

*Lyn*

## Staying Together with Community Support

When Mr Wong first began missing some meals and forgetting to do some of his regular activities, his family put it down to the fact he had retired from managing the family business.

However, he became increasingly forgetful and confused, often ‘going missing’ for long periods. A family friend reported that Mr Wong goes visiting in the neighbourhood, often calling on people he has never met before and is then unable to find his way home.

The whole family were concerned about his safety and tried to prevent him from leaving the house.

A Support Worker began providing in-home respite so that Mrs Wong could go shopping with her granddaughter. By including a walk together during the respite visits, Mr Wong was less likely to wander off on his own and was able to meet more people in the community who could assist him if he became lost.

## Community engagement through respite support

Respite can make all the difference to a family adjusting to the demands of a person with dementia.

Appropriately timed respite allowed Mrs Wong to retain important family and community roles.

Meanwhile, Mr Wong was supported to retain community links through supervised walks and regular orientation to his home area.

*“Walking with the group  
is the highlight of  
my week.”*

*Rosanne*



## Getting by with a Little Help from Friends

Roseanne has early onset dementia. Rather than suggest a dementia centre based day program, the assessment team spoke with the ladies from the local walking group (with Roseanne’s permission).

The team explained Roseanne’s situation to the ladies and asked if they would be open to her joining the walking group each week.

The group agreed and Roseanne began walking with the club. Over a period of months Roseanne has been able to keep up her fitness level.

More importantly, Roseanne has also created a genuine long term network of support through the friendships she has developed with the ladies’ walking group.

### Interest based connection and participation

People with early onset dementia can quickly become isolated due to anxiety about their memory problems. Other aspects of their overall wellbeing may also be overlooked.

By paying attention to Roseanne’s interests and desires it was clear that the walking group would enable her to stay connected to the community, keep fit and establish health routines.



*"I am so pleased. The world seems to be open to me again."*

*Bea*

## Bea Rediscovered Her Independence

Six months after her stroke, Bea had lost her confidence and much of her independence. Her worried family had taken over many tasks that further impacted on her lack of confidence.

Each Tuesday, staff encouraged Bea to walk (with a Support Worker) from her home to the day centre rather than taking the centre bus.

The results over six months have been encouraging and now Bea is also walking unassisted to the library, something she did before the stroke.

Her family is now working with her in the home and she is so happy that she is able to get out and about again.

## Confidence from a Wellness perspective

There is no denying that Bea faced enormous physical challenges after her stroke. Traditionally these would have been 'solved' through ongoing assistance and loss of independence.

As Bea has gradually built her physical capacity she has also built her confidence.

Her rediscovered confidence in walking can easily translate to other areas of her life, allowing Bea to reclaim more of the life she had before her stroke.

*“Being blind is no longer a reason to not create new experiences in my life.”*

*Mavis*



## Simple Ideas Give Mavis a New Outlook

Mavis has been blind for some years and Support Workers had been visiting daily to prepare her meals.

Since the Wellness Approach has been introduced, the Support Worker works with Mavis, who now does all the vegetable chopping. They have also worked out a system (using Velcro) that allows Mavis to identify the containers in her pantry.

These strategies have given Mavis growing independence in the kitchen. The focus was then placed on organising support to assist Mavis to go to the shops, which she had previously not felt confident to even contemplate.

The Wellness Approach has given Mavis the tools to build her own capacity and self belief. Mavis is now ready to take on more.

### Having a disability is not a barrier to independence

Adapting to a disability can be difficult, as it often requires learning new skills and routines.

The assistance of a Support Worker during this transition can prove helpful in developing the skills necessary with encouragement and feedback.

The momentum gained with this assistance can also lead to the first confident step a client takes in attempting new things outside the home and re-engaging with the community.



*“It is good to know these things...it helps me and my family.”*

*Daniel*

## Daniel Learns About His Health

Daniel has diabetes, a disease he knew little about apart from the fact that his brother, sister and mother also had it. Daniel was seen by a podiatrist when his feet became sore and cracked which made walking uncomfortable.

After seeing the podiatrist at the Health Centre, Daniel agreed to go to the local day centre every day for two weeks. There he learned the importance of appropriate footwear.

He was shown how to manage his own daily foot care such as washing, using a pumice stone and careful checking for sore areas.

Daniel soon felt the difference and began wearing shoes instead of thongs. He was very happy to have this knowledge to share with his family and has been continuing his important foot care at home.

## Building skills and self confidence to manage chronic diseases

For a person with a chronic disease such as diabetes, health education, combined with the right early support can help them develop knowledge and skills to manage and overcome their own health challenges.

This can have long lasting positive outcomes both in the present and in the future.

Empowering someone by helping them do something for themselves rather than taking over and doing it for them, can have far reaching effects, not only for the individual requiring the support, but for their family and community.

*“At first I didn’t want to do it, but now I know it was the best thing for me.”*

*Leslie*



## Leslie Makes the Most of Her Abilities

Leslie has an unspecified medical condition and uses a wheelchair to get around. She has been receiving daily support for meal preparation, although manages her own personal care.

When the support was reviewed, it was identified that Leslie was feeling stronger and more confident than she had been when first assessed and was perhaps now more able to participate in some of the meal preparation tasks.

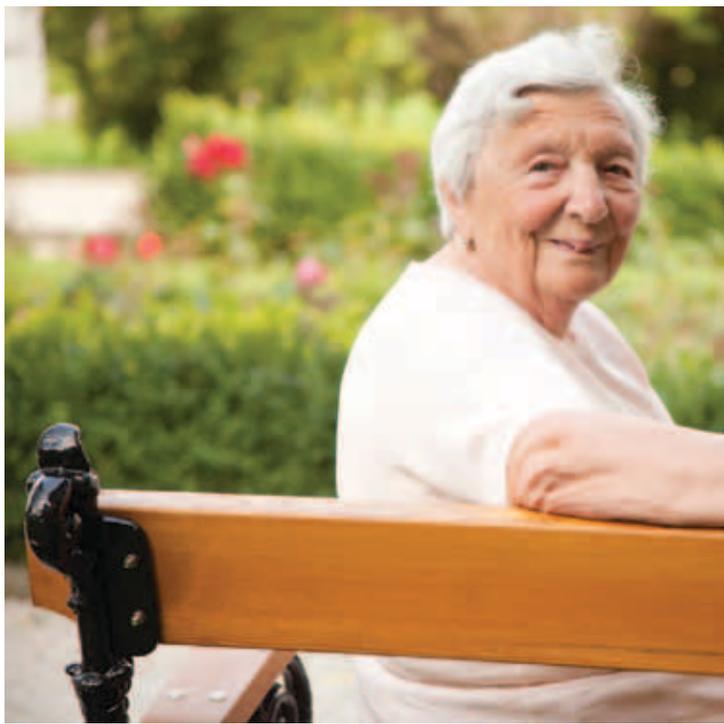
Although reluctant initially, Leslie was able to move around the kitchen in her wheelchair, wash and dry dishes, get food out of the cupboard and fridge, prepare vegetables and use the microwave.

Over time, Leslie became responsible for making more decisions about what she ate, as well as taking an active part in preparing her meals.

### Gentle encouragement can build on existing skills

The appropriate type of support not only maintains existing skills but also develops new ones.

Managing activities such as personal care indicates that the person possesses a range of physical and cognitive skills. When these skills are further developed through participation in a range of activities in the home, a sense of achievement and self confidence can result.



*“When the weather is nice,  
I stay on the bench a bit  
longer to enjoy the sunshine.”*

*Margaret*

## Margaret Stays in the Game on the Bench

Margaret’s recent mobility problems led to difficulties for her in walking to the local shops. The shops were close but on a steady incline from her home.

In her assessment, the walk to the shops was identified as Margaret’s primary form of daily exercise. It also provided her with social contact with the shop assistants.

Rather than just use the HACC funded shopping bus, staff assisted Margaret to write a letter to the local council to organise a bench seat halfway between her house and the shops.

The council put in a bench seat and now Margaret needs no further HACC support. Margaret has maintained her independence by walking to the shops and taking a rest on the bench halfway.

## Maintaining health is broader than HACC service solutions

The broader view taken during assessment revealed that several key areas of Margaret’s health were related to walking to the shops.

A shopping service would have only addressed the obvious issue, while creating challenges with regard to exercise and social contact.

By looking at the bigger picture, a solution was found that easily met all of her needs, allowing Margaret to remain independent and in control of her circumstances.

*“Being encouraged to do a little bit more has helped me see what I can achieve.”*

*Nicholas*



## Small Changes Make a Big Difference

Nicholas has a physical disability. He has been receiving support for many years with showering and other personal activities as he has struggled to attend to aspects of his personal care.

Recently his support staff have been working with Nicholas in a way that encourages him to do a little bit more for himself each time they visit.

He can now hold the shower hose over his head and wash the shampoo out of his hair and also rinse his face after a shave. These were activities that previously seemed impossible.

He has also started to practice how to comb his own hair so he can comb it the way *he* wants it.

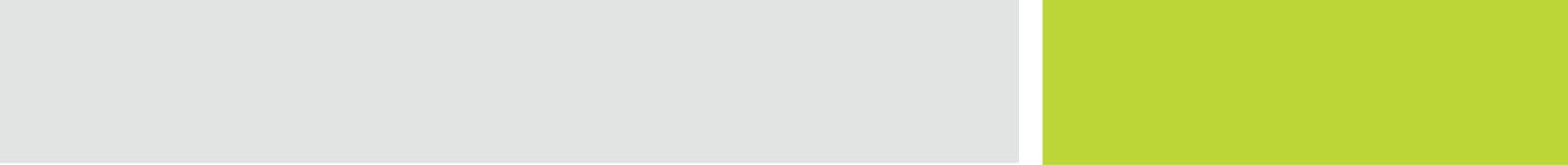
## Building capacity can result in positive outcomes

Encouragement and positive reinforcement are vital ingredients in helping people reach their goals.

Small steps supported by a whole of team approach can help people achieve what they have set out to do. For Nicholas this meant being more actively involved in his daily support. This has given him the confidence to think about what else he can achieve. Nicholas no longer feels so constrained by what he cannot do by refocussing on what is possible.

Need assistance to support you to live independently at home?  
For information about HACC and to find HACC services contact the  
Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre on 1800 200 422.

For all other enquiries about HACC contact:  
Aged and Continuing Care Directorate, Department of Health  
**P:** 9222 4222 **E:** [haccwa@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:haccwa@health.wa.gov.au)  
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For further information about the Wellness Approach contact  
CommunityWest's Sector Development department on:  
**P:** 9309 8180 **E:** [wellness@communitywest.com.au](mailto:wellness@communitywest.com.au) **W:** [www.communitywest.com.au](http://www.communitywest.com.au)