

COTA

For older Australians



Care finder Competency Framework

COTA Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia. We recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their continuing connections to land, sea and community. We pay the utmost respect to Elders past, present and future.



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Common terms and acronyms used in aged care

| Acronym | Term |
|---------|---|
| ACAT | Aged Care Assessment Team |
| ACSN | Aged Care System Navigator |
| CF | Care Finder |
| CHSP | Commonwealth Home Support Program |
| COTA | Council on the Ageing |
| DoHA | Department of Health and Aged Care |
| DVA | Department of Veterans Affairs |
| FECCA | Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia |
| FIS | Financial Information Service |
| HCP | Home Care Package |
| MAC | My Aged Care |
| NACAP | National Aged Care Advocacy Program |
| PHN | Primary Health Network |
| RAS | Regional Assessment Service |
| TIS | Translation and Interpreting Service |

Foreword

The Care finder program is an important part of Australia's aged care system. In a system that emphasises people's choice and control over their care, it is the program that stops people falling through the gaps. Not everyone is in a position to use a website or a call centre to choose their own care. The reasons people might miss out are many, and are as diverse as the life experiences of the older people who have a right to aged care.

Care finders do the work to ensure nobody misses out on the aged care services to which they are entitled. They reach out to the excluded and marginalised. Their clients may be excluded by language, digital literacy, past trauma, limited literacy, cultural difference, sexuality, or for any other reason.

Care finders build relationships with communities and individuals who otherwise would miss out, helping people on their own terms, and ensuring everyone's experience of ageing is one of quality care with respect and dignity. This program is an essential part of making the aged care system fair, accessible, and kind.



Ian Yates AM
Chief Executive
COTA Australia

Introduction

Care finders will help older people who have one or more reasons for requiring intensive support to:

- interact with My Aged Care and access aged care services.
- access other relevant supports in the community.

Care finders will provide assertive outreach to identify and engage with people who need intensive support. Many older people with special needs (as defined in the Aged Care Act) will access care finders if they are vulnerable, marginalised, or disadvantaged, this includes language or cultural differences, being homeless or at risk of homelessness, and needing specialist support because of life history or identity, such as the Forgotten Australian or people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

The *Care finder Competency Framework* (the Competency Framework) outlines the knowledge, skills and work practices that care finders use to achieve the desired outcomes of the care finder program. It builds on person-centred service practice principles and incorporates culturally safe and trauma-informed practices. This framework recognises that care finding happens in communities with varying resources and supports available to both clients and care finders.

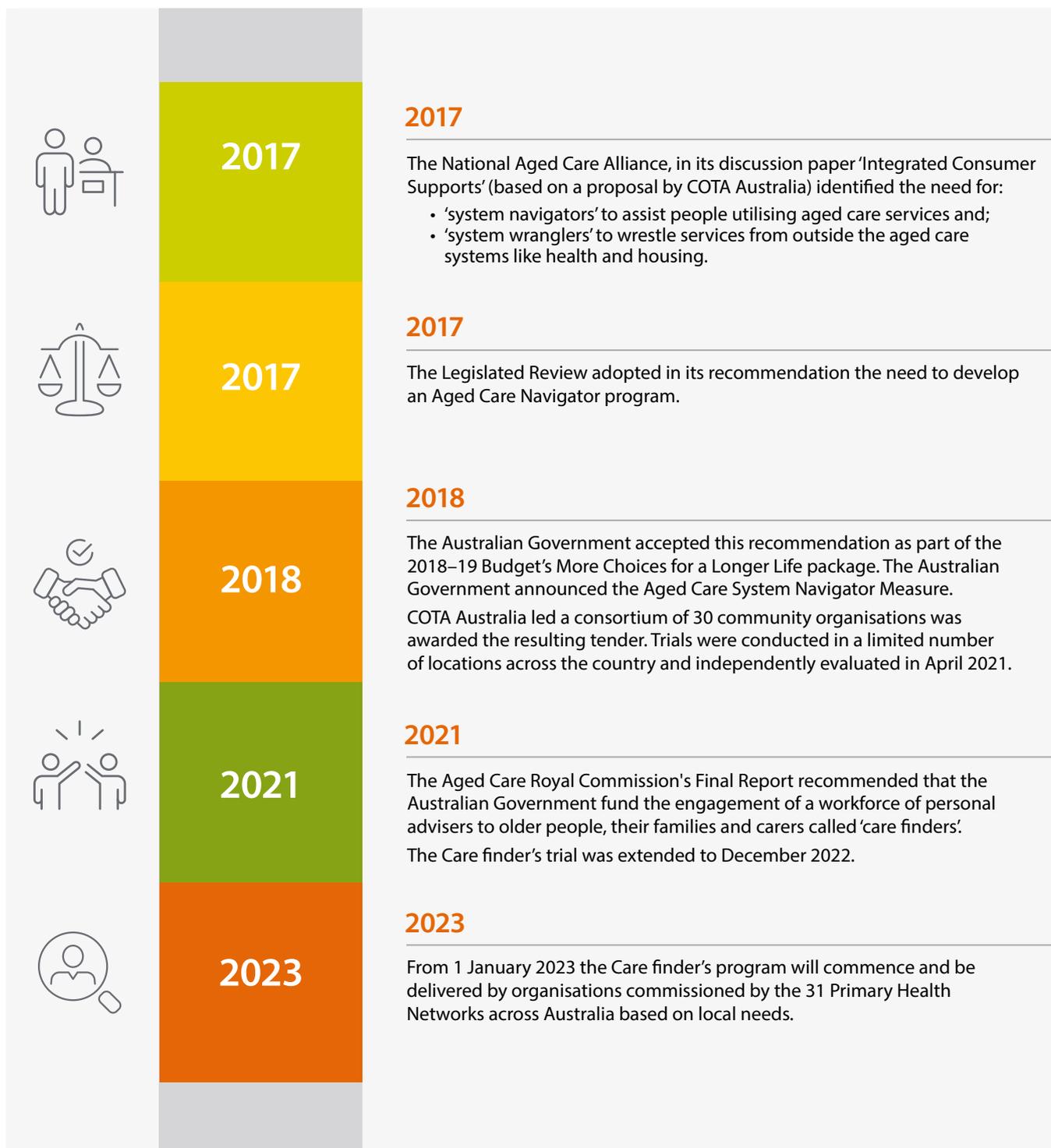
Underpinning the development and design of the Competency Framework is the acknowledgement and understanding that the care finders will be working with a diverse range of clients.¹ Aspects of a person's identity and life experience can interact with systemic barriers compounding discrimination and marginalisation.

The Competency Framework should be read in conjunction with the *Care finder policy guidance for PHNs (Care finder policy)* which is available on the Department of Health's website.² It outlines the scope of service of care finders, including the target group, principles of service delivery and the program's objectives.

Background

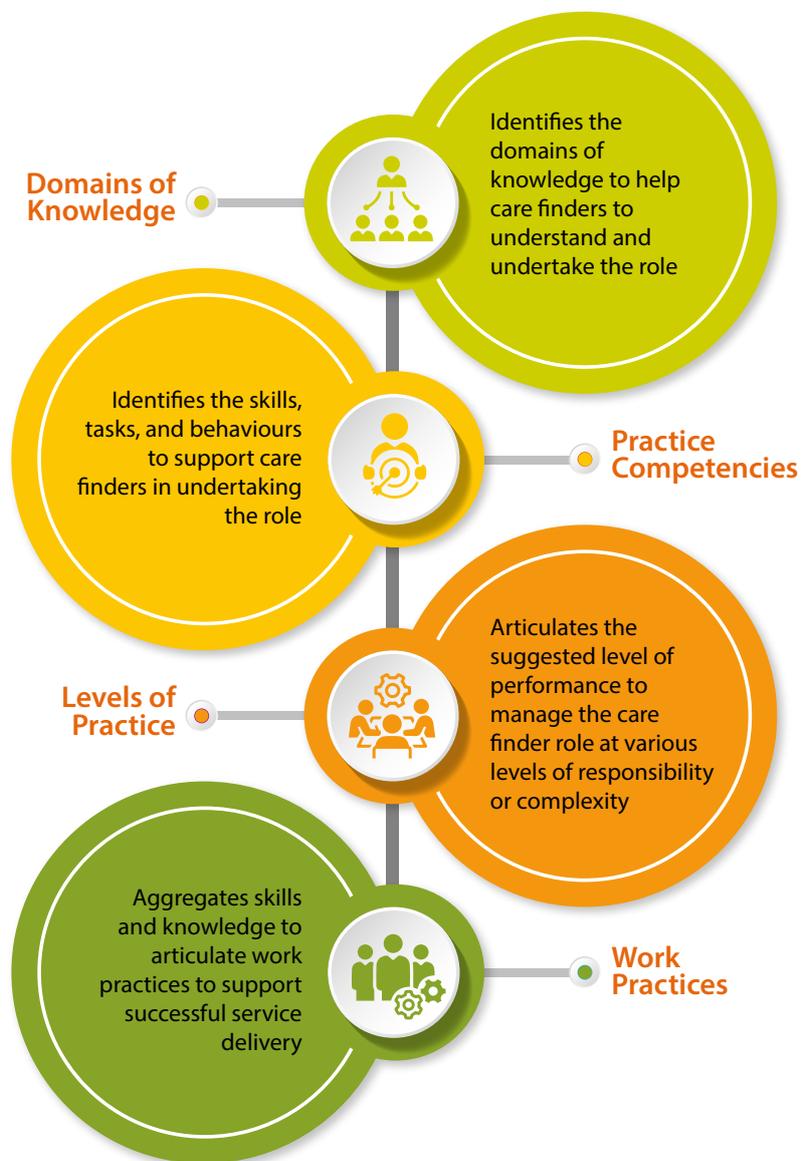
The Competency Framework reflects the lessons learned by the navigators working in the National Aged Care System Navigator Trials coordinated by COTA Australia. COTA Australia also sought feedback and consulted with existing providers of navigator like services, including those delivering the Assistance with Care and Housing sub-program of the Commonwealth Home Support Program.

Key events in the development towards the Care finder program include:



What is a Competency Framework?

A Competency Framework sets out and defines the critical knowledge, skills, tasks, and behaviours that support care finders when undertaking their role. It does this in four ways:



The Framework recognises that care finders manage various tasks concurrently to be competent in their role. Additionally, they should continually reflect on client needs, capacity, and circumstances, including risks, when delivering care finder services.

The Framework does not define the type or style of training to achieve the identified competencies.

The Framework's development was informed by:

- The Aged Care System Navigator Trials' communities of practice, case studies, and evaluation.
- Health Education England (2016). *Care navigation: A competency framework*.
- Aged Care Royal Commission findings.
- Ongoing consultation with navigator type services.

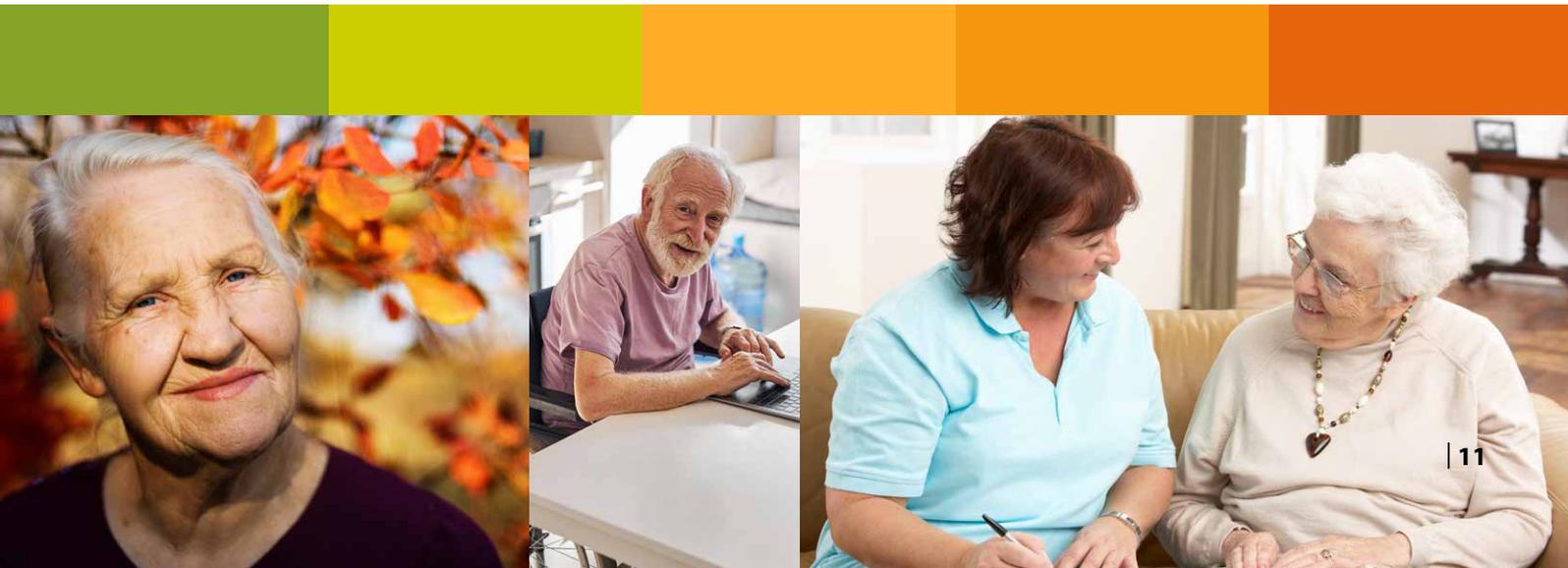
Care finder policy – Purpose, Principles and Target Population

Purpose of the Care finder program

The desired program outcomes are articulated within the *Care finder policy guidance*

The intended outcomes of the care finder program are to:

- 1. Improve outcomes for people in the care finder target population, including:*
 - improved coordination of support when seeking to access aged care*
 - improved understanding of aged care services and how to access them*
 - improved openness and willingness to engage with the aged care system*
 - increased care finder workforce capability to meet client needs*
 - increased rates of access to aged care services and connections with other relevant supports*
 - increased rates of staying connected to the services they need post service commencement*
- 2. Improve integration between the health, aged care and other systems at the local level within the context of the care finder program.*



Care finder principles

The principles in the *Care finder policy* document should guide care finder service delivery:

Person-centred approach

- Place clients at the centre of care finder service delivery.
- Respect and respond to the unique needs, preferences, values, and life experiences of each client.
- Recognise the client is the expert in their own life.
- Support clients to lead in decision making.

Dignity and respect

- Treat clients with dignity and respect and in a way that values their identity, diverse backgrounds, and life experiences.

Choice and self-determination

- Respect and facilitate optimal consumer choice and client control in decision making.

Quality

- Provide clients with accurate, relevant, timely and independent information.

Equitable access

- Support is accessible to all people within the care finder target population.

Partnerships

- Build and maintain local community connections with:
 - The care finder’s target population.
 - Organisations delivering aged care supports and services and other relevant supports.
- Recognise and (where appropriate and with the client’s consent) work in partnership with the client’s carer(s), family, and representative(s).
- Build and maintain relationships with local intermediaries.

Continuous improvement

- Knowledge and skills in relation to care finder support.
- Share expertise and knowledge of local experiences, lessons learned and innovations to support continuous improvement.
- Participate in and contribute to, continuous improvement activities led by their PHN.



Target Population of Care finder program

The care finder target population has been identified within the *Care finder policy guidance*

The care finder target population is people who are eligible for aged care services and have one or more reasons for requiring intensive support to:

- *Interact with My Aged Care (either through the website, contact centre or face-to-face in Services Australia service centres) and access aged care services and/or*
- *Access other relevant supports in the community.*

Reasons for requiring intensive support may include:

- *Isolation or no support person (e.g. carer, family or representative) who they are comfortable to act on their behalf and/or who is willing and able to support them to access aged care services via My Aged Care*
- *Communication barriers, including limited literacy skills*
- *Difficulty processing information to make decisions*
- *Resistance to engage with aged care for any reason and their safety is at immediate risk or they may end up in a crisis within (approximately) the next year*
- *Past experiences mean they are hesitant to engage with aged care, institutions or the government.*

While it is envisaged that care finders will mainly work directly with the person who needs to access services, they may also (where appropriate and with the person's consent) work with the person's carer(s), family and/or representative(s) (providing they also need intensive support to interact with My Aged Care, access aged care services and/or access other relevant supports in the community) to help the person to access the services they need.³

COTA notes with appreciation that items 9.3 and 4.2 of the *Care finder policy guidance* provides flexibility in appropriately handling inquiries from people outside of the target population.



Defining the Context of the Care finder's Work

Coordination of Supports

The *Care finder policy guidance for PHNs* makes clear the different functions of care finders and aged care providers. Care finders provide intensive navigation support to help people to access the services they need. Care finders do not take the role of service providers who co-ordinate aged care services for clients. The *Care finder policy guidance for PHNs* defines the difference this way:

Care finders are responsible for providing intensive navigation support, and their functions do not include coordination of aged care services. Providers are responsible for the day-to-day management of a client's care needs, including coordination of services and managing changes to a client's care needs.

These guidelines recognise that many clients will need intensive navigation support. This is relevant to care finders assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to stabilise their housing arrangements.

To ensure the role of care finders is not confused with other functions, such as the service provider's role of care management in the coordination of aged care services, intensive care finder support is not referred to as case management, even though it may adopt similar features as case management.



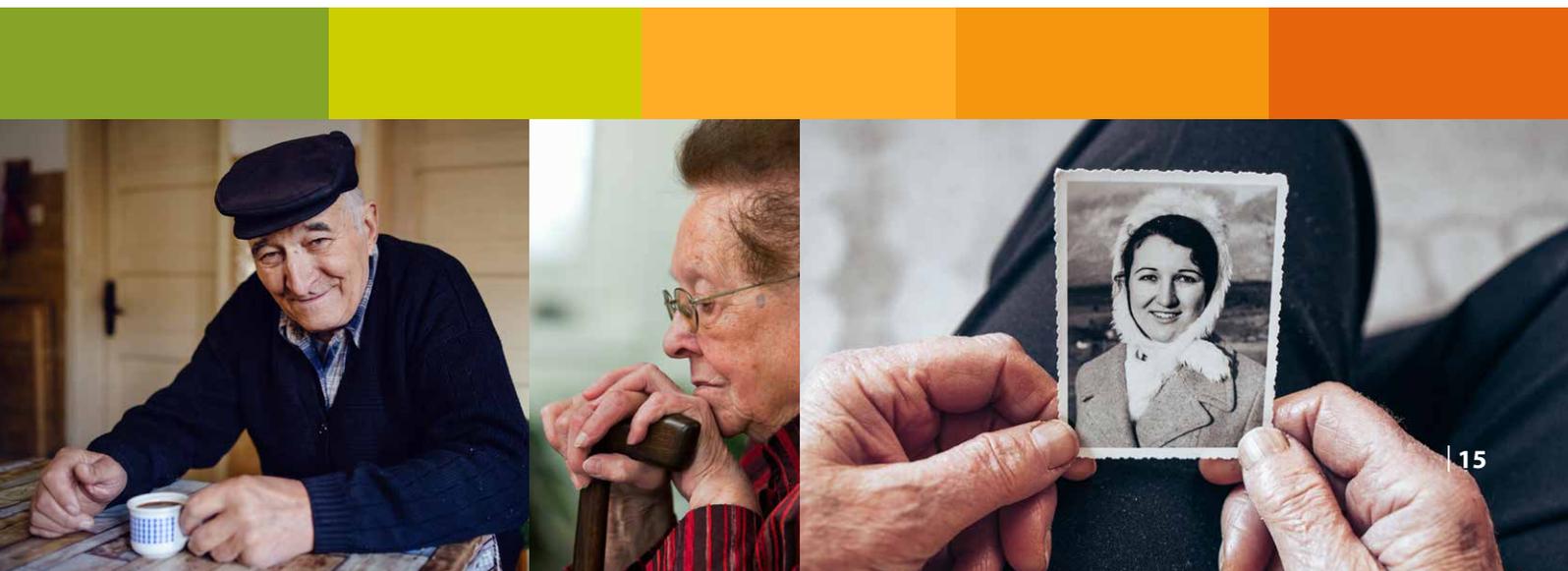
Assertive Outreach Strategies

Care finder work is reaching out and engaging with diverse people who need intensive support or otherwise would fall through the cracks. The *Care finder policy guidance* identifies this process as assertive outreach and defines it:

Care finders will undertake assertive outreach to proactively identify and engage with people in the care finder target population. This includes:

- *Reaching into the local community and actively identifying and engaging with potential clients, including through direct contact and supported contact via intermediaries (such as health professionals, aged care and disability sector professionals and people from within community and voluntary organisations)*
- *Exploring and establishing different ways to effectively engage and build rapport with potential clients, including:*
 - *adapting their style of working to suit the individual needs of each person*
 - *meeting people in their own environment, such as their home or other environment familiar to them, at a convenient time for them*
 - *where needed, connecting with people over a number of occasions to build a relationship prior to providing support to understand and access aged care.*
- *Building, maintaining and leveraging networks of intermediaries and otherwise leveraging connections/networks in the local community to support identification of and engagement with potential clients.*⁴

The models adopted by the different care finder organisations to facilitate this way of working will depend on the communities they are working with and the individual needs of care finder clients.



Client Diversity and Intersectionality

Underpinning the development and design of the Care finder Competency Framework is the acknowledgment and understanding that the care finders will be working with diverse clients across a broad range of communities. Some people will face challenges due to isolation with little or no support, while others face difficulties due to marginalisation.

Each competency and their respective skills and tasks are framed to reflect that different aspects of a persons' identity and systemic barriers may intersect, resulting in multiple forms of discrimination and marginalisation.

The Competency Standards have adopted the broad definition of diversity articulated in the National Aged Care Diversity Framework 2017.⁵

Older people display the same diversity of characteristics and life experiences as the broader population. Older people with diverse needs, characteristics and life experiences can share the experience of being part of a group or multiple. Groups that may have experienced exclusion, discrimination, and stigma during their lives. However, they are not a homogenous group. There are some similarities within groups about the barriers and difficulties they may face in accessing the aged care system but additionally have specific social, cultural, linguistic, religious, spiritual, psychological, medical, and care needs. In addition to common challenges, social differences often overlap as people identify with more than one character can exacerbate already complex issues. There is no limit to the number of characteristics a person holds, and no two people's lived experiences are the same.

The Competency Framework identifies a broad range of people and groups belonging to diverse communities, including:

- First Nations peoples
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex (LGBTI) people
- Parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal
- People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- People living with cognitive impairment, including dementia
- People who are care-leavers
- People who are experiencing socio or economic disadvantage
- People who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
- People who live in rural, remote, or very remote areas
- People with a disability
- People with mental health problems and mental illness
- Veterans

The Competency Framework recognises that some people may not belong to an identified group, while others could belong to more than one of these groups. Care finders should consider the diverse populations in the local area. When working with individuals from within diverse populations, care finders should recognise their other personal attributes to ensure a broad understanding of the person including their strengths and needs.

Care finders should undertake specialist training for any specific diverse groups they are working with, such as Forgotten Australians or refugees. It is up to the care finder organisation to ensure staff have the skills and capacity to work with peoples' specific needs and develop linkages with organisations which have the skills to assist. The policy guidance has a mandatory requirement for care finders to complete training in cultural safety and trauma-informed care.



The Care Finder Competency Framework Structure

Domains of Knowledge

This Framework identifies nine discrete domains of knowledge to help care finders to understand and undertake their role successfully.

Seven relate directly to client interactions, while two relate to systems knowledge. Knowledge is defined as “*theoretical understanding of a subject and its potential application to a problem or activity*”. Knowledge enables the care finder to actively problem solve and deal with novel situations as they arise.

Care finder Domains of Knowledge

1. Communication / Interpersonal Skills
2. Access to Services
3. Person-Centred
4. Service Coordination
5. Knowledge of Ageing
6. Education and Information
7. Records Management and Reporting
8. Building and Sustaining Networks
9. Professional Role

It is assumed that many care finders will have prior knowledge of these domains due to training or previous work experiences. Other care finders may have to undertake additional training and support to reach the appropriate competency level for their role.

Practice Competencies

Each Domain of Knowledge identifies a range of tasks and skills that the care finder is expected to be proficient in.

Levels of Practice

The Levels of Practice bring together the skills and tasks within a domain, defining at what level the staff or care finder is working at. These levels are progressive and build on each other, starting with Tier One.

Staff who are responsible for answering telephones will likely need competencies to perform basic information provision and screening of suitability for the care finder program. It should, however, be noted that some staff may also perform the more complex function of intake, which may involve initial client needs assessment (not formal aged care assessment which is undertaken by Regional Assessment or Aged Care Assessment teams). This level of intake may need more expertise and relevant competencies.

Examples of work at each level of practice

This Framework's levels of practice are not designed to dictate the specific roles and functions that must be conformed to by all care finder organisations. Instead, it recognises the varying need level of clients and the varying competencies required at different 'tiers.'

For example, in one organisation a receptionist may provide basic information which requires some competencies and then hand clients on to their organisation's care finder staff who perform their own intake and assessment. In another organisation the information provision, screening and intake functions may all be provided by the first person who answers the phone, suggesting different competencies will be required.

Tier One

The worker is responsible for calls as they come to the care finder organisation and may undertake screening and initial need assessment before directing them to their organisation's care finder for intensive one-on-one support.

- May have minimal experience working in relevant settings (such as social work, human services, aged care, community services and/or health settings) or,
- Some experience working within an administrative role but should have good communication skills to support their initial contact with clients.

Tier Two

Care finder providing support to their clients.

- Should have relevant qualifications (such as social work, human services, aged care, community services or health) and/or relevant experience.
- Will often provide face to face services.
- Should have experience working with complex individuals and with difficult and challenging behaviours and/or specialist skills working with specific subgroups of the target population.

Tier Three

Provides individual support to complex care clients with multi-dimensional needs and / or lead a care finder team.

- Should have relevant qualifications (such as social work, human services, aged care, community services or health) and a depth and breadth of knowledge and experience of relevant systems such as health, housing, social and aged care, enabling a greater ability to support person-centred care and wellbeing.
- Routinely apply knowledge to actively problem solve novel issues.
- Should have the education, knowledge, and expertise to use critical thinking and decision-making skills to recognise and address complex problems at individual and system levels.
- Should also have expertise in working with difficult and challenging behaviours,
- Can be expected to mentor and supervise others in care finder roles and may have skills in managing the reporting and contract management obligations of the program.

Care finder organisations will use a range of models and have different levels of staffing to undertake care finder role/s. The levels of practice have been developed to enable flexible staffing responses by organisations and recognise the specialist nature of some care finders.

If an organisation chooses to have specific staff undertake specific roles such as a specialist intake worker, they should review the necessary competencies and skills to identify and match the job description.



Summary of Domains of Knowledge



Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Understanding of interpersonal, trust-building, and communication skills, resulting in effective exchange of information and collaboration with clients, their families, and services.



Access to Services

Understanding of how to assist and support clients to access services, supporting clients to identify and access services that are appropriate to their individual needs, preferences, and circumstance.



Person-Centred Practice

Understanding of the principles of Person-Centred practice, incorporating the principles of Trauma-Informed Practice, Cultural Safety, and inclusive practices in doing so.



Service Coordination and Integration

Understanding of how to ensure the clients' supports are delivered in a coordinated manner, reducing service complexity and confusion and maximising individual choice and control.



Knowledge of Ageing

Understanding of the ageing process and related life transitions to provide support based on clients' individual capacities, needs and circumstances.



Education and Information

Understanding of how to effectively provide information to older people and their families, enabling informed decision making.



Record Management and Reporting

Understanding of effectively managing clients' information and records consistent with good records management practices and the Australian Privacy Principles.



Building and Sustaining Networks

Understanding of how to effectively build local networks that will support clients to access and use services.



Professional Role

Understanding of the importance of ongoing development and education to enhance their professional practices and service delivery.

Care Finder Work Practices

Work Practices synthesise the practice competencies into everyday tasks that may be undertaken by a care finder operating at a certain level of practice. Individual competencies may be applied in day-to-day work and may be useful in job descriptions.

Two specific ways of working underpin the work practices in the Framework:

- Cultural Safety
- Trauma Informed Practices

These work practices are crucial when working within a person-centred model, particularly for individuals and groups who face ongoing marginalisation. Many of whom face intersectional issues. Based on the care finder program policy guidance, the Framework has a particular understanding of care finders' role in service coordination, as described below.

Cultural Safety as an Underlying Work Practice

Cultural Safety principles inform and underpin the work practices identified in this Competency Framework. The adoption and use of Cultural Safety principles will enhance equitable outcomes for people at both the individual and system levels.

The *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Report*⁶ identified and accepted the importance of cultural safety principles and their application in aged care, particularly for those who are marginalised and have diverse backgrounds, particularly First Nations peoples. The Aged Care Quality Standards, Standard 1. Consumer Dignity and Choice identifies Cultural Safety as a significant element of this standard.⁷

Cultural safety acknowledges that everyone has a unique lived experience while at the same time having a shared history and the common cultural identity of a group. Further, it recognises that cultures are dynamic and change over time. Significantly it understands that groups of people often share a common history, which could include experiences of systemic discrimination and violence.⁸

The care finder and client engagement should be respectful and open when working within a cultural safety framework. Clients should not experience their engagement with the care finder as an assault on their identity, dignity, and lived experiences. Clients decide whether their encounter with the care finder felt safe and effective, not the care finder.

Significantly, cultural safety goes beyond the basic notion of cultural sensitivity and cultural competency and includes concepts such as awareness and knowledge of clients' culture.⁹ Cultural safety focuses on the power imbalances, institutional discrimination, and colonial relationships manifest in staff and institutional behaviours, attitudes, processes, and structures, i.e., intersectionality.¹⁰

To achieve a culturally safe outcome for clients, the care finder should openly listen and be willing to learn from their clients about who they are and what support they need to live their lives as they wish. The encounter between the care finder and clients should be marked by a co-production process of knowledge generation, understanding and trust. Such an approach requires the care finder to critically acknowledge their own values, attitudes, and assumptions and how these impact equitable and safe outcomes for clients.

Cultural safety understands that cultural awareness and sensitivity are separate concepts and are not interchangeable with cultural safety. For services to be delivered in a culturally safe way, care finders must acknowledge cultural diversity exists and communicate in ways that incorporate cross-cultural communication practices.

Trauma-Informed Practice as an Underlying Work Practice

It is acknowledged and understood that care finders will be working with diverse clients, many of whom have experienced or continue to experience trauma.

The experience of trauma is often exacerbated by the intersection of issues experienced by clients. For example, a higher proportion of women with a disability experience violence than non-disabled women.

Trauma is an event, series of events or set of circumstances experienced as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening. When it is repeated and extreme, occurs over a long time, or is perpetrated in childhood by caregivers, it is called complex trauma. Trauma can result in acute and/or ongoing adverse effects, distress, or disruption to the persons' life.

Trauma Informed Practice is a way of working with people who have experienced significant or complex trauma. Trauma Informed Practice is a strengths-based framework founded on five core principles: safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment, and respect for diversity.¹¹

Trauma informed services seek:

- not to harm the person they are working with
- not re-traumatise or blame the person for their efforts to manage their traumatic reactions
- embrace a message of hope and optimism that recovery is possible.

These services see survivors as unique individuals, who have experienced highly abnormal situations and have managed as best they could.¹²

As noted in the *Care finder policy guidance*, all client-facing staff in care finder organisations should have training in trauma-informed care and have ongoing support and supervision in this area.



Care Finder Competencies

The following section contains the competencies for each of the nine domains of knowledge.

These competencies are based upon the lessons learnt from the Aged Care Navigator Trial.

Each domain of knowledge has 3 tiers. Each tier builds upon the proceeding tier. Importantly, these competencies should not be seen as static. As the care finder program evolves, so should the competencies to reflect the growing body of knowledge and identified good practices.



1 DOMAIN OF KNOWLEDGE 1: Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Understanding of interpersonal, trust-building, and communication skills, resulting in effective exchange of information and collaboration with clients, their families, and services.

● Tier One Practice Competencies

- Communicate clearly, sensitively, and effectively with clients and other staff.
- Communicate in a warm and empathic manner and build trust with clients.
- Maintain a calm and sensitive approach when dealing with people in distress.
- Present information clearly and effectively when speaking with others.
- Applies the principle of trauma-informed practice and cultural safety when communicating with clients to create and sustain a safe place, as defined by the client.
- Communicate in ways that respects clients and does not infantilise them.
- Accurately translates complex administrative language and processes into a language and form that clients understand to enable clients to make informed choices.
- Adapt communication style and method to best support client's preferences and capacity.
- Communicate in ways that are informed by cultural awareness and sensitivity.
- Understand and use common terminology in health, social, and community care sectors.
- Use interpreters to communicate with clients who do not speak English to enable effective service delivery by care finders.

● Tier Two Practice Competencies

- Listen to clients' verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Accurately and consistently identifies and prioritises clients' issues in discussion with them.
- Communicates consistently with clients to build and maintain trusting relationships.
- Understanding the diverse communities they work with so that they can communicate in ways that respect individual preference, language, culture and lived experience.
- Skills in cross cultural communication.
- Communicate with formal and informal intermediaries and understands their role as information gatekeepers for potential and existing clients.
- Communicate with My Aged Care staff, including My Aged Care Contact Centre staff and My Aged Care assessors, to share and gather information.
- Set and communicate care finder service boundaries with the clients.
- Resolve conflict via clear verbal and non-verbal communication; including manage distress or anger.
- Understand how to communicate with clients with cognitive impairment, including those people with dementia, to enable effective care finder service delivery.
- Emphasise ideas and opinions respectfully and positively when dealing with services to facilitate service provision for clients.
- Use appropriate interpreter services and interpreters to communicate with clients and is aware of the dynamic nature of cultures.

- Present and communicate information to diverse audiences and agencies within and outside the care finder organisation to educate them about care finder services.

● Tier Three Practice Competencies

- Applies and promulgates the principles of cultural safety when communicating with other service providers to ensure the appropriateness and the equity of service provision for clients from diverse backgrounds.
- Skills in cross cultural communication.
- Set and communicate care finder service boundaries with clients with challenging behaviours.
- Communicate with clients using a broad range of skills and methods to support behaviour change if clients' behaviour limits access to service, such as those who are aggressive due to cognitive impairment, including those with dementia.
- Manage conflict with clients, teams, colleagues, and other agencies to ensure the effective operation of the care finder program.

2 DOMAIN OF KNOWLEDGE 2: Access to Services

Understanding of how to assist and support clients to access services, supporting clients to identify and access services that are appropriate to their individual needs, preferences, and circumstance.

● Tier One Practice Competencies

- Access up-to-date information on local services and supports.
- Understanding of My Aged Care, aged care, health, housing, and other services and systems commonly used by older people.
- Screen people to determine which assistance is required as part of the intake process, and direct them to appropriate services and supports, including those who are prematurely aged.
- Understand that people with diverse needs may require more than aged care services, including health, housing or social support services.
- Signpost and facilitate contact for clients with appropriate services (with client consent).
- Understanding of the eligibility criteria to receive aged care services, including for clients who have prematurely aged.
- Support clients to access and register with My Aged Care (either via online portal or call centre).

● Tier Two Practice Competencies

- Understanding of aged care, health, housing, and other services and systems for older people; including both their purpose and eligibility requirements.
- Understanding of local aged care, health, and housing services and how to access those services.
- Understanding of the eligibility criteria to receive aged care services, including for clients who have prematurely aged.
- Identify barriers to clients accessing and receiving support services.
- Understanding of, and proficiency in, the use of My Aged Care and its different elements, including screening, registration, assessment, and service selection.
- Support clients to select services they have been assessed as needing using the My Aged Care portal and call centre.
- Understanding of diverse communities and support to clients accessing services that respect and support the clients' culture, language, preferences and lived experiences.
- Support clients to identify and access local community, aged care, health, housing, and other services based on their needs and preferences.
- Initiative in seeking contacts with relevant local services for clients.
- Apply the principles of cultural safety to ensure equitable and appropriate access to services by clients.
- An active, problem-solving approach to helping clients connect and access services relevant to their needs and preferences.

- Understand the boundaries of the care finder program and care finder role when working with clients and alternate supports.
- Persistence and resilience when faced with barriers to accessing services for the clients.
- Understanding of local referral pathways and waiting lists and advocacy for clients with pressing needs.

● Tier Three Practice Competencies

- Provide timely feedback to colleagues around issues about access to services.
- Provide timely feedback to relevant authorities at the commissioning and strategic level to improve services.
- Apply and promulgate the principles of cultural safety when reviewing the intake process, and access to service providers, ensuring the appropriateness and the equity of service provision.
- Monitor standards and service improvement projects.
- Educate and inform peers and other staff about relevant services for older people.

3 DOMAIN OF KNOWLEDGE 3: Person-Centred Practice

Understanding of the principles of Person-Centred practice, incorporating the principles of Trauma-Informed Practice, Cultural Safety, and inclusive practices in doing so.

● Tier One Practice Competencies

- Identify clients' expressed needs.
- Direct clients to appropriate services in response to their expressed needs, including care finder support.
- Acknowledge clients' preferences, culture, beliefs, and other attributes.
- Respects clients' individual life stories and circumstances
- Use language that does not infantilise or disempower the older person.
- Ability to apply trauma-informed practices and work within a framework of cultural safety.
- Understanding of working with clients with cognitive impairment and ability to maximise clients' individual choice and control.
- Respect clients' individual preferences; including culture, language, religion, and sexuality.
- Understanding and sensitivity to issues that limit clients' capacity to engage with My Aged Care; including (but not limited) to poor literacy, lack of access to digital tools, lack of proficiency in English, lack of skills/knowledge to engage with complex administrative systems, and/or lack of trust in Government.

● Tier Two Practice Competencies

- Maximise client independence and autonomy in the provision of support and information.
- Understand the diverse needs of people who have experienced systemic marginalisation and shapes service responses accordingly, in particular Forgotten Australians, people who identify as LGBTIQ, and First Nations peoples.
- Awareness of specific issues for homeless people, or people at risk of homelessness, including challenging behaviours, and the need for periods of intensive support by care finders, to organise and stabilise clients' housing and aged care supports.
- Understand that past trauma and ongoing trauma can lead to premature aging for some people, including homeless people, refugees, and First Nations peoples.
- Acknowledge and respects clients' informal and formal support networks.
- Build relationships of trust with clients and those who support them.
- Build on clients' strengths and resources when identifying their needs and developing strategies for engaging with aged care services and other supports.
- Acknowledges and supports clients to be the expert in their own life.
- Understand intersecting issues that may disempower clients and create hesitancy to engage with aged care services and other relevant supports.
- Form partnerships with the clients when identifying their priorities.
- Acknowledge and respect for clients' right to self-determination.

- Understanding the implications of client informed consent and apply principles of the Dignity of Risk when considering options with clients.
- Collaborate with clients to identify and document their needs and preferences when engaging with aged care services and other supports.
- Emotional support to clients as they disclose information and needs.

● Tier Three Practice Competencies

- Assist clients to identify and prioritise their complex health, mental and social care needs and direct them to appropriate support: in particular, those clients with limited comprehension as a result of cognitive impairment or mental illness.
- Detailed knowledge of health, housing and other relevant systems and accurate referral of clients with complex health, mental and social care needs to appropriate specialist professionals, teams, and services, including, for example, Older Peoples Mental Health Teams.
- Expertise in working with clients with intersectional issues and/or challenging behaviours in a safe manner for the client and staff.

4 DOMAIN OF KNOWLEDGE 4: Service Coordination and Integration

Understanding of how to ensure the clients' supports are delivered in a coordinated manner, reducing service complexity and confusion and maximising individual choice and control.

● Tier One Practice Competencies

- Understand that people with diverse needs may need to receive services from more than one program simultaneously, including health, housing and social supports.
- Understand that clients may not know or understand who they are receiving different services from, and may be confused about the services they are receiving.
- Awareness of the range of services delivered to clients and the possibility that providers may not be aware of each other.
- Understand the importance of services being delivered in a coordinated way to promote clients' choice and control.

● Tier Two Practice Competencies

- Detailed knowledge of Aged Care, Health, Social and Housing systems, including the scope of service, eligibility requirements and boundaries of these systems.
- Understanding of referral processes across local service systems, including formal and informal supports.
- Make timely warm and cold referrals to other services and supports.
- Understand the role of informal networks that support and sustain clients within their community.
- Collaborate with clients to identify the supports required to meet their individual needs and preferences.
- Understand the sequencing of support services for people experiencing homelessness to encourage stable housing support before (or at the same time as) providing aged care and other services.
- Maximise the opportunities for seamless service transitions and coordination with clients, reducing complexity and confusion for the client and those who support them.
- Understand working with clients who have cognitive impairment or mental illness, the multiple services they may require, and ensure care finder services they receive are delivered in a coordinated way to support client choice and control.
- Support clients to articulate their needs and preferences for support services and coordination.
- Understand the diverse needs of people who are at risk of homelessness, and those who are homeless, including the intersecting issues that create this situation.

- Provide periods of intensive support to stabilise a clients' aged care and other relevant supports in the community, including housing, health, and social needs.
- Monitor implementation of actions from care plans/meetings and potentially follow up.
- Communicate clients' needs within cross-disciplinary/multidisciplinary team meetings or case conferences.
- Understand the boundaries of the care finder program and appropriately refer clients to other services when appropriate.
- Connect clients with relevant support for financial and legal matters.

● Tier Three Practice Competencies

- Participate in and inform system improvement and integration processes both internally and at the local level.
- Participate and lead cross-discipline meetings to enhance the delivery of coordinated and integrated services.
- Advocate and utilise person-centred services across local service networks.

5 DOMAIN OF KNOWLEDGE 5: Knowledge of Ageing

Understanding of the ageing process and related life transitions to provide support based on clients' individual capacities, needs and circumstances.

● Tier One Practice Competencies

- Basic understanding of the ageing process and possible associated cognitive impairments (including dementia), mental health conditions and health conditions.
- Aware of mental health crises that may impact a person's behaviour, including their seeking of timely and appropriate help.
- Appreciate and understand where the care finder organisation fits within the broader context of care systems.
- Understand the importance and purpose of community and social support for older people.
- Understand the role of carers and informal supports.
- Awareness of elder abuse and its impacts on individuals.
- Understand and acknowledge that each persons' ageing experience is unique, based on their lived experiences, values, circumstances, and cultural background.
- Acknowledge societal and cultural views of older people that shape clients' perspective of ageing and supports they need.
- Understand legal structures such as power of attorney and Public Guardianship arrangements for people with diminished capacity.

● Tier Two Practice Competencies

- Understand the ageing process and critical transition points as people age, including changing function and perceived loss of independence.
- Acknowledge the diversity of family structures and informal supports that sustain older people in the community as they age.
- Understand common long-term physical, psychological, cognitive, and mental health conditions that may impact a clients' wellbeing as they age (and other issues related to financial wellbeing and housing).
- Understand that some older people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CALD) may lose fluency in spoken English as they age.
- Knowledge of and respect for the role of carers and their role in supporting clients.
- Understanding elder abuse and its effect on the older persons' wellbeing, security, and reporting requirements.
- Understand dementia and its impact on clients including, behavioural and psychological symptoms and impact on carers and other supports.
- Understand people who are likely to have prematurely aged, and the impact of premature ageing on the individual.
- Knowledge and awareness of the local community and the impact of social exclusion and marginalisation on people as they age.
- Understand the experiences of more vulnerable older people such as Forgotten Australians and the impact of these experiences on people as they age.

● Tier Three Practice Competencies

- Understand social determinants of health and impact upon care finder target group.
- Consistently apply knowledge of ageing to understand and problem-solve client issues, in relation to the accessing and provision of Aged Care Services, for example, the impact of frailty upon the person.
- Comprehensive understanding of current Health and Aged Care policies and reform process.
- Understanding trauma and its effects on ageing and premature ageing.

6 DOMAIN OF KNOWLEDGE 6: Education and Information

Understanding of how to effectively provide information to older people and their families, enabling informed decision making.

● Tier One Practice Competencies

- Present information to clients in appropriate formats to enable effective communication.
- Awareness of the impact of limited literacy and financial literacy in the provided information.
- Ability to provide relevant practical information and reflects clients' needs, circumstances, and capacity.

● Tier Two Practice Competencies

- Maximise clients' independence and autonomy by providing accessible and actionable information and support.
- Accurately assess clients' preferred way of receiving information and shape communication accordingly to enable informed decision making.
- Understand the Aged Care System, including My Aged Care Contact Centre staff, My Aged Care assessors and associated supports for older people.
- Acknowledge and respect that clients bring their life experience and knowledge to interpret and use the information provided.
- Apply community development principles and practice to target formal and informal intermediaries in the community with information about the care finder program.
- Understand limited literacy and its impact on clients' ability to access and use services.
- Understand digital literacy including for clients with limited familiarity with technology, limited access to online systems, and the impact on clients' ability to access and use services.
- Provide clients unbiased, independent information to enable clients to make informed choices.
- Tailor information to clients' capacity, needs, and preferred learning style to maximise individual choice and control.
- Research and interpret relevant information to remain knowledgeable about appropriate aged care, health, housing, and other systems policies and procedures.

- Provide feedback on inaccurate information found in local information systems (e.g. local council directory) to ensure accurate information is available for future potential care finder clients.
- Analyse and present data and information to teams and Primary Health Networks.
- Understand and implement the principles and practices of adult education when presenting information to clients individually or in groups.

● Tier Three Practice Competencies

- Use the principles of adult education when providing clients with information and supporting the client.
- Assess and evaluate the impact of service to inform the improvement of local services and demonstrate the impact of care finder service.
- Identify and review information from a range of sources relevant to the provision of person-centred care finder services.
- Use audit and other approaches to monitor standards and propose improvements when required.
- Evaluate the validity and potential bias of information.
- Evaluate service data, including client experience and outcomes, to improve services, and participate in quality improvement.

7 DOMAIN OF KNOWLEDGE 7: Record Management and Reporting

Understanding of effectively managing clients' information and records consistent with good records management practices and the Australian Privacy Principles.

● Tier One Practice Competencies

- Use appropriate technology and resources to record, find, and process information.
- Understand and adhere to data standards, including relevant data guides.
- Apply Australian Privacy Principles in the collection and sharing of client information.
- Understand the principles of audit and ongoing quality improvement.
- Understand the importance of accurately documenting client interactions, client records and referrals.
- Application of Australian Privacy Principles concerning collection, use and disclosure of client personal information during intake, assessment, service delivery and sharing of information.
- Proficiency in My Aged Care permission levels and privacy requirements, such as consumer representatives.
- Support clients' right to privacy and not to disclose information.
- Assess clients' capacity to make decisions about release of their data.
- Understanding of why sensitive information can only be accessed by appropriate staff and those allowed to view the information by the client.
- Record client information consistently with principles of cultural safety.
- Keep relevant records on tasks undertaken and client interactions.

● Tier Two Practice Competencies

- Consistently inform clients why information is collected and collated, at intake and throughout the clients' use of the service. This includes who data is shared with and how it is stored, and the secondary uses of data, such as government reporting and program evaluation.
- Understanding of sending and receiving client referrals consistent with the Australian Privacy Principles.
- Proficiency in local referral protocols between services and across systems.
- Understanding which information is considered health information and the circumstances in which health information can be collected, collated, stored and shared.
- Understand the circumstances when personal data can be released to other organisations consistent with Data Privacy Principles and Commonwealth, State and Territory laws.
- Capacity to undertake data auditing and quality improvement strategies.
- Knowledge of and ability to implement data collection, collation and storage processes in accordance with Australian Privacy Principles.

● Tier Three Practice Competencies

- Ensure all client records are created, stored, archived, and disposed of consistently with the Australian Privacy Principles.
- Produce accurate and timely reports as required by Primary Health Network.
- Understand which records and information must be released, and can be released, according to the law.
- Support staff to use and understand language in reports that is consistent with cultural safety principles and support equity-focused language.

8

DOMAIN OF KNOWLEDGE 8:

Building and Sustaining Networks

Understanding of how to effectively build local networks that will support clients to access and use services.

● Tier One Practice Competencies

- Builds and maintain good working relationships with a broad range of local workers to facilitate effective information exchange and support.
- Maintain a clear sense of role and responsibility within a team.
- Be supportive and helpful toward other team members.
- Relate to and work with clinical and non-clinical staff in other organisations, building constructive relationships across sectors.
- Value the role of critical others working within and beyond the organisation.

● Tier Two Practice Competencies

- Build and sustain trusting relationships with a broad range of local workers to facilitate effective information exchange and support.
 - Seek relevant and appropriate contacts to develop sustainable networks across various sectors, including health, social, housing, and voluntary.
 - Promote sharing of resources and information from a broad range of sources to inform clients' knowledge and decision making.
 - Capacity to build on and sustain existing formal and informal service and networks for older people.
 - Knowledge of services and supports for older people from diverse backgrounds, including the language, culture, and lived experience of clients and their communities.
 - Understanding of the principles and practices of community development to build and sustain networks with a broad range of communities.
 - Identify potential and actual barriers to receiving services and facilitate referrals, as appropriate, to mitigate the effect of these barriers.
 - Develop knowledge of the local, community, and national resources.
 - Identify the quality of services and establish relationships with providers of these services.
 - Understanding and respect for clients' informal care networks including friends, family, neighbours, and others.
- Develop and sustain connections with dementia and specialist mental health support services for clients with challenging behaviours.
 - Adapt, develop, and promote client intake and referral pathways by collaborating with internal and external stakeholders.
 - Facilitates timely scheduling of appointments and meetings to promote continuity of care, where appropriate.
 - Understanding of the role of formal and informal intermediaries as gatekeepers to potential clients, including those formal and informal support networks.
 - Develop and sustain trusting relationships with clients, services, and the community by providing accurate, independent information and support.

● Tier Three Practice Competencies

- Provide opportunities for colleagues under supervision to develop professional networks and cross-sector relationships.
- Promote timely follow-up on treatment and supportive care recommendations.
- Identify opportunities to collaborate with others across networks to benefit clients and carers.
- Promote training and professional development of care finders working at lower tiers of practice, including by acting as a positive role model to team members and colleagues.

9 DOMAIN OF KNOWLEDGE 9: Professional Role

Understanding of the importance of ongoing development and education to enhance their professional practices and service delivery.

● Tier One Practice Competencies

- Willingness to learn and develop within the role.
- Show responsibility for self-reflection and personal development.
- Competent in My Aged Care Learning Environment (MACLE) training modules.
- Routinely receive clinical/professional supervision to ensure effective intake, initial client need assessment and care finder service delivery and actively manage demands of the role.
- Understand and engage with the process.

● Tier Two Practice Competencies

- Promote own role and care finder services to others working within and outside the organisation.
- Knowledgeable and proficient in using online information systems, including My Aged Care, MyGov, and other online systems relevant to providing support and services for older people.
- Undertake training and skill development to remain competent in delivering identified good practices in Aged Care.
- Provide supportive and constructive feedback to other staff.
- Contribute to delivering education, training, and supervision of others.
- Knowledge and skills in reflective practices when working with clients and other staff.
- Understand the importance of sharing expertise, knowledge of local experiences, and innovations by active participation in continuous improvement, including those led by Primary Health Networks.
- Assist in gap analysis, quality improvement, process improvement measures.
- Data analysis, and makes recommendations for the effective operation of service.
- Contribute to the knowledge base of community care, aged care, and healthcare through activities such as presentations, publications, and research.

● Tier Three Practice Competencies

- Contribute to the planning and delivery of education, training, and supervision of others.
- Identify training needs of current and future staff.
- Coordinate and conduct appraisals of other navigation staff.
- Provide supportive feedback about the learning and assessment in practice.
- Act as a positive role model to others and promotes expanding skills to higher levels.

Operationalising the Framework

The following is an example of what a care finder could do in their job, using components from different domains of knowledge. It shows how individual competencies are applied in day-to-day work and provides example competencies that may be included in position descriptions. As individual roles for care finders are crafted, each will likely include different components, reflecting on the needs of clients, communities, and the teams they are working in.

An example of the work practices of a care finder

■ Tier One Care Finder Practice/Tasks

- Create a safe and welcoming environment for clients. In doing so, the care finder communicates in ways that are informed by cultural awareness and sensitivity.
- Provide appropriate information and support so that clients exercise and maximise individual choice and control of their care and support needs where this is possible, in ways that are respectful of clients' diversity and lived experiences.
- Explain options and choices available to clients within the aged care system and associated services and respond to individual questions and concerns.

■ Tier Two Care Finder Practice/Tasks

- Explain the rights, entitlements, and obligations of clients of aged care services (including under the Aged Care Quality Standards) and care finders (as per PHN Performance and Quality Framework).
- Interactions with client are informed by Cultural Safety Principles and Trauma Informed Practices.
- Build respectful relationships with clients, so that clients trust the information and knowledge provided to them and can act on it.
- Develop trusting relationships with formal and informal intermediaries.
- Listen to presenting narrative/stories and accurately identifies clients' information and service needs. Contextualises individual questions and responses in ways that build and support clients' confidence and knowledge.
- Appreciate clients' culture, life experience, and preferences to provides independent, tailored information about accessing and using specific services
- Using modalities appropriate to the clients' preferences, attributes, and skills (for example, literacy/health literacy) and respond to individual questions.

- Reduce structural barriers so that clients can interact effectively with My Aged Care and service providers.
- Promote fair outcomes for clients using a framework of natural justice/procedural fairness to ensure equitable outcomes for clients.
- Respect client privacy and ensure personal information is managed consistently with relevant principles, legislation, standards, and evidence-based good practice.
- Support clients in contact with Government/Agencies/Providers to achieve the clients' desired outcomes.
- Help clients' problem-solving at the individual and system level to support their individual needs, preferences, and cultural expectations.
- Maintains a consistent and trusting relationship over an extended time with clients that respects and promotes clients' rights to self-determination and choice.
- Advocate for clients, where appropriate and requested (speaking on behalf of the client) to help achieve the clients' desired outcomes/preferences.

■ Tier Three Care Finder Practice/Tasks

- Engage with multiple funded programs (aged care/health/housing) so the clients receive appropriate information and services, and make referrals on behalf of the client as appropriate.
- Provides appropriate information and knowledge required to enable the client to interact effectively with complex systems (knowledge translation).
- Initiate trust networks with intermediaries and service providers to enhance referrals to care finder (community development).
- Support and supervise staff as required.

Care finder Self-Assessment Checklist

Care finders are expected to demonstrate knowledge and practice in a range of competencies. This checklist incorporates these competencies into the day-to-day work that staff may undertake. Care finders and line managers can use it to readily determine the level a care finder is operating at. Results can be used to develop staff inductions and staff training.

Assessment

Workers are required to show the 'Why' and the 'How' of undertaking a task.

- In assessing the 'Why' of a practice, the worker must be able to articulate the reasons for undertaking that work practice.
- In assessing the 'How' the worker should be observed undertaking the work practice.

The practice level can be scored as:

- Failed to Demonstrate Competency
- Partially Met Competency
- Met Competency.

Self-Assessment Checklist

| Practice | Competency |
|--|--|
| Tier 1 Care Finder Practice/Tasks | |
| A | Creates a safe and welcoming environment for clients. In doing so, the care finder communicates in ways that are informed by cultural awareness and sensitivity. |
| B | Provides appropriate information and support so that clients exercise and maximise individual choice and control of their care and support needs. Does this in ways that are respectful of clients' diversity and lived experiences. |
| C | Explains options and choices available to clients within the aged care system and associated services and responds to individual questions and concerns. |
| Tier 2 Care Finder Practice/Tasks | |
| A | Explains the rights, entitlements, and obligations of clients of aged care services (including under the Aged Care Quality Standards) and care finders (as per PHN Performance and Quality Framework). |
| B | Interactions with clients are informed by Cultural Safety Principles and Trauma Informed Practices. |
| C | Builds respectful relationships with clients, so that clients trust the information and knowledge provided to them and can act on it. |
| D | Develops trusting relationships with formal and informal intermediaries. |
| E | Listens to presenting narrative/stories and accurately identifies clients' information and service needs. Contextualises individual questions and responses in ways that build and support clients' confidence and knowledge. |
| F | Appreciates clients' culture, life experience, and preferences to provide independent, tailored information about accessing and using specific services |
| G | Uses resources appropriate to the client's preferences, attributes, and skills (for example, literacy/health literacy) to respond to individual questions. |
| H | Reduces structural barriers so that clients can interact effectively with My Aged Care and service providers. |
| I | Promotes fair outcomes for clients using a framework of natural justice/procedural fairness to ensure equitable outcomes for clients. |
| J | Respects client privacy and ensures personal information is managed consistently with relevant principles, legislation, standards, and evidence-based good practice. |
| K | Supports clients in contact with Government/Agencies/Providers to achieve the client's desired outcomes. |
| L | Helps clients problem-solving at the individual and system level to support their individual needs, preferences, and cultural expectations. |
| M | Maintains a consistent and trusting relationship over an extended time with clients that respects and promotes clients rights to self-determination and choice. |
| N | Advocates for clients, where appropriate and requested (speaking on behalf of the client) to help achieve the clients' desired outcomes/preferences. |
| Tier 3 Care Finder Practice/Tasks | |
| A | Engages with multiple funded programs (aged care/health/housing) so the clients receive appropriate information and services. Care finder can make referrals on behalf of the client as appropriate. |
| B | Provides appropriate information and knowledge required to enable the client to interact effectively with complex systems (knowledge translation). |
| C | Initiates trust networks with intermediaries and service providers to enhance referrals to care finder (community development). |
| D | Supports and supervises staff as required. |

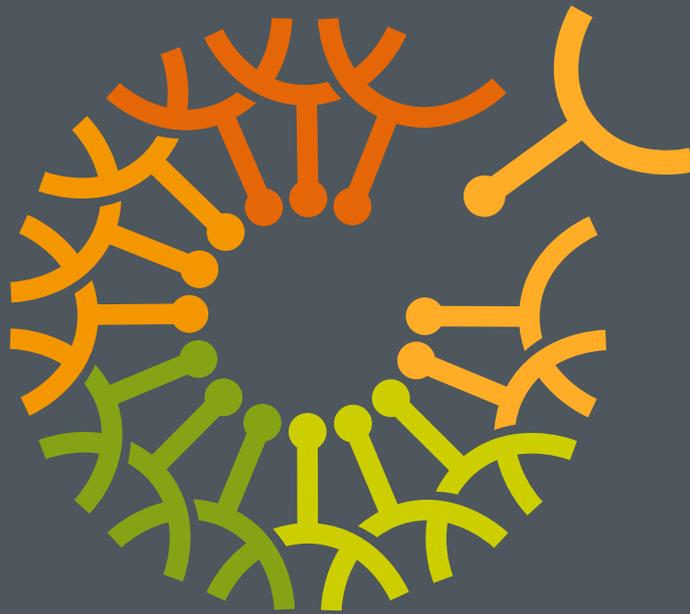
| Practice | Demonstrates Knowledge: 'Why' | Demonstrates Practice: 'How' |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Tier 1 Care Finder Practice/Tasks | | |
| A | | |
| B | | |
| C | | |
| Tier 2 Care Finder Practice/Tasks | | |
| A | | |
| B | | |
| C | | |
| D | | |
| E | | |
| F | | |
| G | | |
| H | | |
| I | | |
| J | | |
| K | | |
| L | | |
| M | | |
| N | | |
| Tier 3 Care Finder Practice/Tasks | | |
| A | | |
| B | | |
| C | | |
| D | | |

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