



Helping Hand Home Aged Care (Helping Hand) is a not-for-profit aged care provider that offers services in both residential and home care, as well as independent living units. The ELDAC Linkages program was implemented within the home care sector in the metropolitan area, providing care to approximately 515 clients.

Helping Hand's vision is to be the most trusted and exceptional partner in aged care services, with a strong focus on supporting clients' wellbeing. Helping Hand values a client's individual preferences and choices in planning and delivery of care.

Clear goals and actions were set at the start of the program to ensure the team could achieve their goal of capacity building across the service group.

A clearly established relationship with specialist palliative care services was essential to achieving their desired outcomes. While procedures were needed to guide home care staff in supporting clients with advance care planning, the availability of social workers to assist was limited. Nursing and care staff required training as they lacked confidence in assisting clients with advance care planning and providing palliative care. Consequently, Helping Hand could not accept clients requiring palliative care and had to refer them to other services to ensure they were well supported. This situation was something they were very eager to improve.

"As a Clinical Manager, I feel more confident that our nurses can recognise pain and the need for symptom management, now knowing when, how, and who to refer to for medical and specialist palliative care."

Since completing the ELDAC Linkages program, noticeable improvements have been observed across all domains, including clinical, education, policy and procedure, and information systems. Helping Hand established a strong commitment among staff to provide the best quality care to clients and introduced 'palliative care champions' within the team to support care delivery. Teams were upskilled through registered training, increasing their confidence in delivering palliative care. Nurses who were confident in their skills were identified to mentor care and nursing staff. Linkages with other health care services including palliative care specialist services were built, enhancing resources to support staff in understanding and delivering palliative care at home.

Helping Hand now works collaboratively with specialist palliative care services and is able to accept referrals for home care support. The teams are trained to identify client deterioration and know when to refer to specialist services or GPs. Communication has improved between service teams, particularly in situations where there is a complex case with shared care of a client in the home. The ELDAC Linkages facilitator assisted in establishing linkages with the Specialist Palliative Care Team and supported the service to achieve their goals through the program.



"Our care workers are much more knowledgeable about recognising deterioration."

We have more confidence in the care worker champions to identify and report change in our client's condition.

Key outcomes

- Established a strong commitment from staff to provide the best quality care to clients
- Established 'palliative care champions' within the team to support care delivery
- Increased confidence across the care team through education and upskilling
- Identified nurses to share their skills and to mentor care and nursing teams
- Built linkages with Palliative Care Specialist Services and Palliative Care SA
- Increased resources to support staff to understand and deliver palliative care at home
- Staff educated on the importance of self care for care givers and how to access relevant resources
- Improved skills in leading end of life discussions with clients

Helping Hand Aged Care and Home Care Service



Home Care



Salisbury South,
South Australia

Goal

To develop or improve systems, processes and knowledge to strengthen the capacity to provide palliative care in the home for clients wishing to remain in their own homes through to the end of life.

Highlights

- Introduced Palliative Care Kits across every region to respond promptly for urgent requests to deliver personal care in the home for palliative clients
- Increased skills and capability in developing and providing palliative care, symptom management and recognising deterioration and end of life care needs
- Observed improvements across all domains including clinical, education, policy and procedure, information systems and continuous improvements

End of life wishes fulfilled at home

It was a late Tuesday afternoon when our care manager was contacted by a home care coordinator team leader to urgently assist with a client. The client had returned from hospital two weeks prior. The GP had provided a late day home visit to find the client had deteriorated and had let the client's wife know he did not have long. The wife immediately called the care coordinator for urgent assistance to remain at home. Due to our new processes, resources and capabilities, we were able to organise urgent physiotherapy to assist with equipment set up, slide sheet training for staff and our client's wife, as well as deliver assistance with personal care within the first 24 hours. This smooth scenario was in contrast to our prior capabilities. Usually, we would have needed to ring the ambulance as we previously did not have staff with the relevant skills in the area or the resources to respond so promptly.

We were able to arrange a hospital bed delivered overnight with assistance from the Specialist Palliative Care Team, and the client transferred into the lounge room so that family could be close to him. We were able to have an end of life discussion with the client's wife to review the client's wishes, which was to stay at home with family and kept as comfortable as possible.

Thanks to the ELDAC Linkages program and facilitator, we were able to provide the client and his wife with support, care and resources to manage and fulfil these wishes.

For our client and his wife at home, we had prepared our staff on end of life care and had a key care worker to lead and to upskill the rest of the team. His wife was able to care for her husband according to his wishes with support from the client's GP and Helping Hand staff. The client was able to die peacefully at home with his family present.

The wife expressed her gratitude and appreciation for ensuring that her husband was able to be cared for at home throughout the end of his life. She was grateful with the care workers who were trained and prepared. The wife, son and daughter were also able to assist as they had also received training from the physiotherapist. We were able to care for the client at home until the day he died.

We never imagined we could provide this type of service in the home before participating in the program. It enabled us to reflect on our approach to end of life care in the home. ELDAC gave us the confidence, skills and knowledge to be able to provide end of life care.

Jessica Bryant, Clinical Manager Helping Hand