



ELDAC acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the many traditional lands and waters throughout Australia. We recognise the knowledge, strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and their continuing connections to land, sea and community. ELDAC pay the utmost respect to Elders past, present and future.

PC SA Self-Care Room October 2022



## What is ELDAC?

End of Life Directions for Aged Care (ELDAC) is a project funded by the Australian Government Department of Health to support quality care at the end of life. It aims to make the existing evidence and resources more easily accessible and used. There are four objectives:

- Provide specialist palliative care and advance care planning advice to aged care providers and GPs providing health care for recipients of aged care services;
- Improve linkages between aged care services and palliative care services;
- Improve the palliative care skills and advance care planning expertise of aged care service staff and GPs providing health care for recipients of aged care services; and
- Improve the quality of care for aged care recipients, prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and shorten hospital stays.



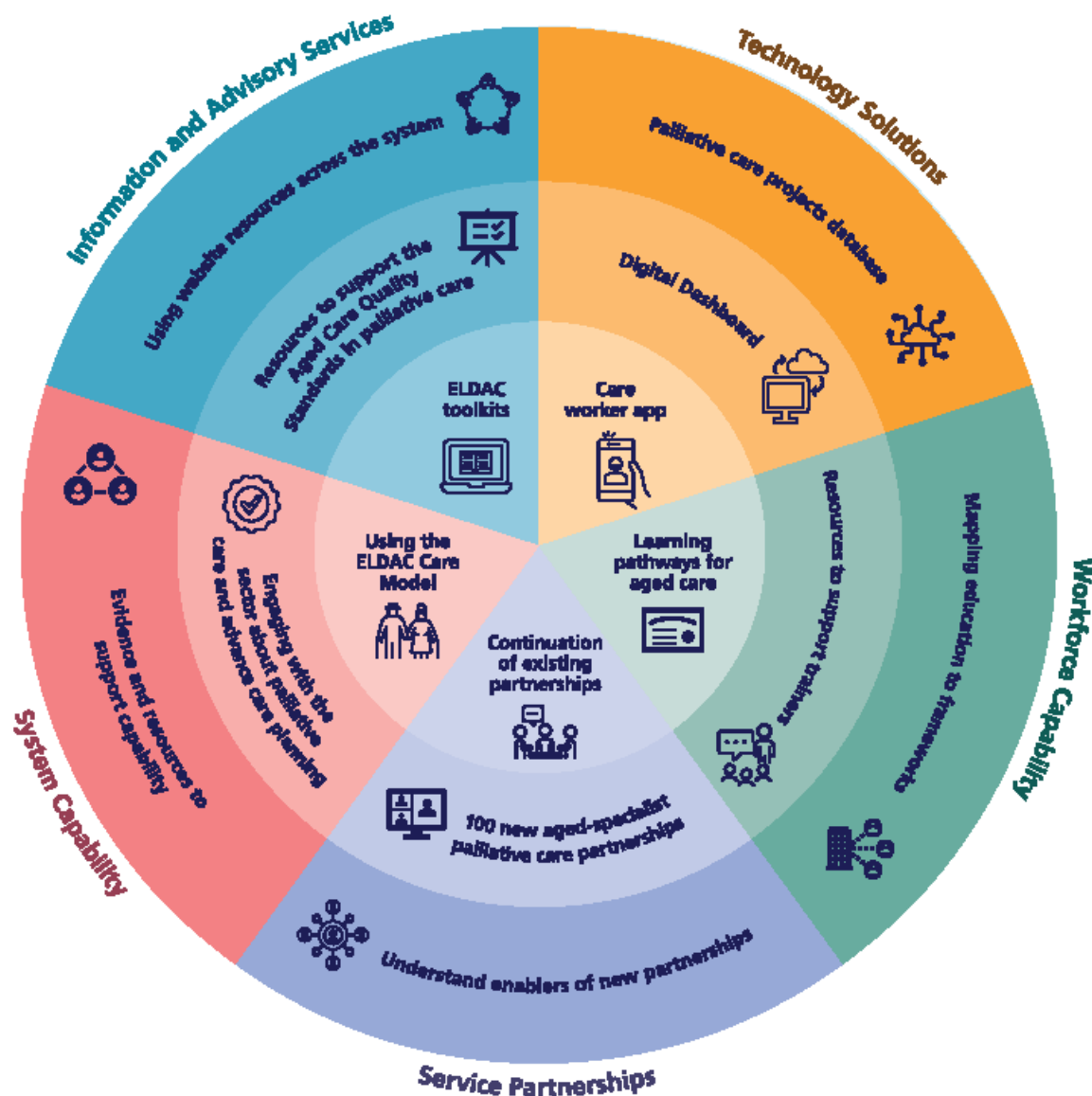
# Self-care, Technology and ELDAC

# We're supporting the aged care workforce.

ELDAC is developing new resources to support the aged care workforce at the individual, service and system level.

Our work spans five areas that are significant to the provision of palliative care in aged care.

Sign up to our newsletter via the ELDAC website for the latest news and updates:  
[www.eldac.com.au](http://www.eldac.com.au)



# Part of Technology and Innovations



ELDAC is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health

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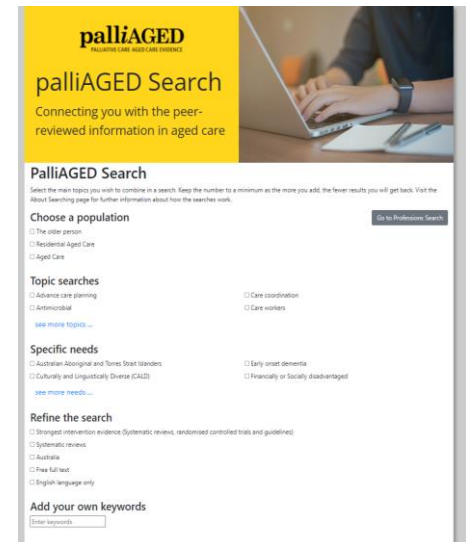
## 5 self-care ideas that work

- 1 Take your break**  
 Push yourself to take a proper break. It will help you to continue caring.
- 2 Breathe deeply**  
 Practice deep breathing and put it into practice when you're feeling stressed. It will help you to relax.
- 3 Stay hydrated**  
 Keep your water bottle with you and remember to drink. It will help you to feel good and think clearly.
- 4 Say hello**  
 Get to know your workmates. It will help you to connect and look out for each other.
- 5 Appreciate yourself**  
 Remind yourself that your care matters. Pause and think about how your work makes a difference to others.

Visit the ELDAC Self-Care Room for more ideas for self-care and to share your ideas with others!

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## An Online Self-care Project

*Why does self-care matter in aged care?*

Protect health professionals and aged care workers against burnout and compassion fatigue

Build resilience capacity in the workforce

Acknowledge that aged care is providing care for people at the end of life

*Standard 9 of the National Palliative Care Standards* Employers should support self-care.

“Staff are trained in self-care strategies and advised on how to access personal support.”

*Standard 7 of the Aged Care Quality Standards:* A workforce that is “skilled and qualified to provide safe, respectful and quality care services.”

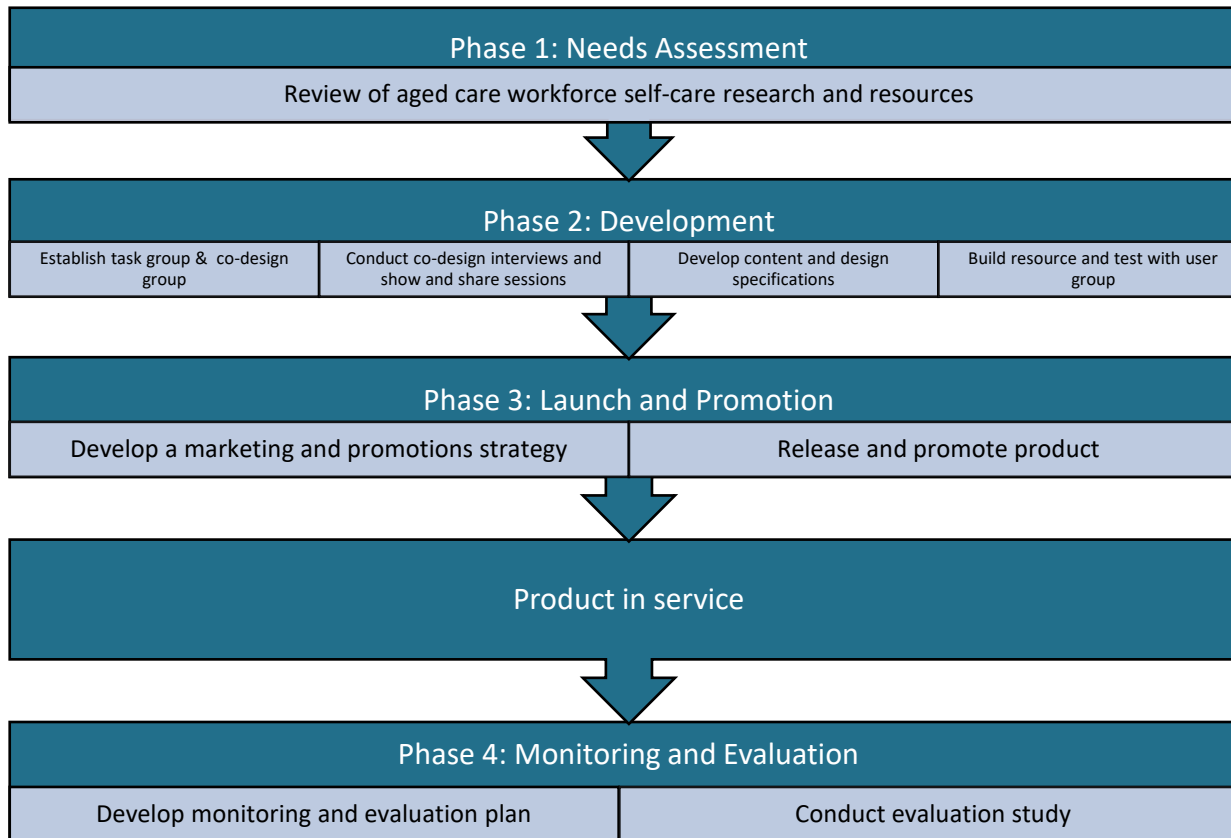
Project Leads: Dr Anna Lane and Professor Jennifer Tieman

In-house digital build by Flinders ELDAC team

At commencement: No specific concept of the shape of the resource except online



# Self Care Project phases



- ## Needs Assessment
- Scoping Review
  - Environmental Scan



# Scoping Review

## Objectives

Identify existing self-care resources for aged care workers in Australia.

Identify evidence on the effectiveness of self-care resources.

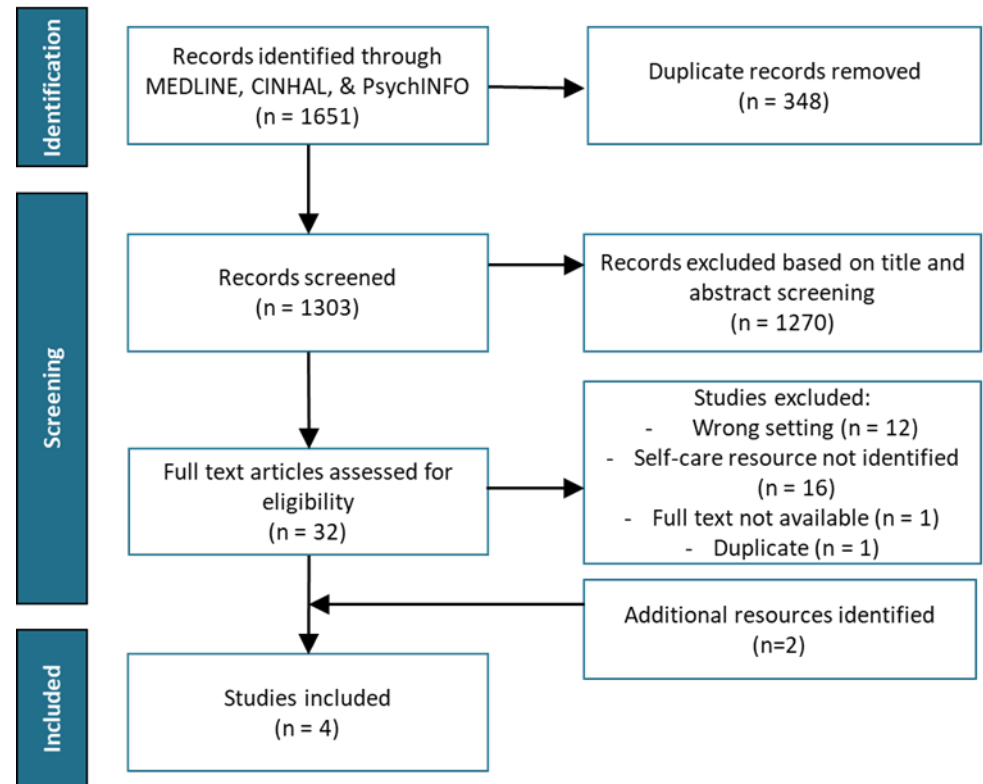
Identify barriers and facilitators of self-care resource use.

Identify outcomes or measures that could be used in evaluation.

Identify theoretical frameworks that explain how self-care resources influence behaviour.

## Scoping review

Guided by Arksey and O'Malley's framework, and the Guidance for the Conduct of JBI Scoping Reviews.



## Scoping review: Findings

Only 4 explicitly on topic. Additional 16 deemed relevant and learnings noted.

Strategies that were identified by workers as beneficial included:

- Opportunities to discuss the death of a resident.
- Being present with the resident when they die.
- Having a physical space at work for processing grief or expressing emotions.
- Taking short breaks when a resident death has occurred.
- Having in place rituals for remembering or saying goodbye to a resident.
- Spiritual resources such as access to clergy or priests.
- Education and training in palliative care.

Some personal resources or ways of coping included:

- Feeling satisfied with the quality of care they were able to provide.
- Focusing their mental energy on the resident.
- Careful use of humour.
- Believing that patient is no longer suffering.
- Believing that death is a normal part of life.
- Psychological hardiness.

Self-care practices such as physical exercise and meditation identified

Role of whole of system approach and organisational support noted.

## Environmental Scan

*Aim:* To assess the need for an ELDAC online self-care resource for aged care workers.

*Method:* Modified version of the methodological framework suggested for rapid reviews

*Search strategy:* Aged care; Palliative care; Workers; Self-care; Burnout  
Keywords and phrases, with Boolean search operators, were entered and searched using Google Advanced Search

*Results:*

Dedicated websites: n=5

Organisational websites: n= 9

Downloadable resources : Self-care planning (n=5);

Factsheets, Tips sheets and information sheets (n=23);



## Key Findings

1. There is an opportunity to develop an online resource for care workers. Existing resources aimed at nurses and doctors
2. The ELDAC digital platform may be uniquely placed to support self-care action in aged care settings.

### Other observations from the scan

- Workers face barriers to self-care.
- Many resources were developed as a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Most self-care resources focus on the individual worker, not teams or organisations
- Many called evidence based but uncertainty about effectiveness





# Design and Development Process

## Participation: Co-design & Co-Production

### *Self-care Task Group:*

Expert advisory group with palliative care and self care and digital expertise

### *Design Activities*

Interview: Design interviews with 11 aged care staff. Understanding of self-care, awareness of resources, personal experiences around self-care, death and dying

Show and Share: Replaced co-design workshop (Covid limited):

Show design concept and design aspects for emotional and critical reactions and directions.

Individual and small group on-line

Focus Group: Small group of residential aged care workers in one facility. Understanding of self-care and impact of covid19

### *User Testing*

n=25 with 16 formally consenting

Ethics: Flinders University Project ID 4652



## Insights

- To aged care staff, self-care means taking care of yourself and your team
- Self-care is important to aged care staff, but it often gets neglected
- Self-care is important because there are many challenging aspects of aged care work
- Aged care staff engage in a range of self-care behaviours at home and work
- Aged care staff are affected by death and dying
- Organisations have a role in encouraging and supporting employee self-care
- Aged care staff responses have mixed responses to available online self-care resources
- There were definite views on design concepts:
  - Purple or pink were preferred colours but don't saturate with pink*
  - Use minimal text*
  - Use vectors rather than images or homepage and make sure images are inclusive.*

# Implications for Build

- Simple visual interface
- Using the voices of the workforce
- Connecting to other resources
- Providing a range of options in manageable chunks
- Providing ideas for self care including quick wins
- Address death and dying directly
- Recognising the organisation's role
- Encouraging sharing and feedback



## Cope with death and dying: Wisdom from the workforce

As part of developing the Self-Care Rooms, we talked to many different people in aged care. They shared their thoughts about what happens to people working in aged care where death is a part of care. These are some of the important points they wanted to share.

### Recognise your care was important

*"Her family couldn't be with her towards the end of her life. I was with her. I'd spend as much time as I could with her. I'd sit there and I'd tell her that I was there."* (PCW, RAC)

*"If I am there when they do go, I'm usually holding their hand, or talking to them."* (PCW, RAC)

*"I take a lot of pride in making them comfortable."* (PCW, RAC)

### Acknowledge that when someone dies it affects you

*"I think what made it worse was when her breathing got very shallow, and I know she was coming to the end. I told her I was going out for a minute. I went out and I had a cry because I wish that I could have saved her, but I know that I couldn't."* (PCW, RAC)

*"I know I cry over some of them that die because I sit with them. You spend time with them and you love them."* (PCW, RAC)

*"I was sad. But I was also happy that she wasn't suffering anymore."* (PCW, RAC)

*"I like to take a trolley into the person's room, we've got the mouth swabs on it, so we can keep them moist and that stays from dying out. I have creams, and I've got a music player. And I usually put on their favourite music, or I'll do the things that they wanted for their end of care if it's requested."* (PCW, RAC)

### Say goodbye

*"I gave her a kiss on the forehead, and I said goodbye to her. I felt like, even though she died, she knew that she was treated with dignity."* (PCW, RAC)

*"Because I try and build a relationship with the people I look after, when they're palliative and they're at the end of their life, shedding some tears for them is a way for me of saying I loved her or him and I'm going to miss them."* (PCW, RAC)

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## Get started with supporting your staff to cope with death and dying

Caring for people who are dying can impact aged care workers' mental, emotional and physical health. Self-care is an important practice that can help to protect care workers from burnout and support them to recover from the emotional toll that caring for people at the end of life can take.

As part of developing the Self-Care Room, we heard from many people working in aged care and learnt about how death and dying affects them. Here are some useful ways organisations can care for their staff:

- Raise awareness among staff that death is a natural part of life and that as many people die in aged care each year, caring for older people as they die is a part of the service that aged care provides.
- Make time for staff to talk about their feelings following a death.
- Support staff to attend a resident's funeral if they wish to do so.
- Communicate with staff about a resident's death.
- Acknowledge a resident who has died by forming an honour guard.
- Set aside time during staff meetings to remember residents who have died.
- Allow time after the death of a resident before placing a new resident in their room.
- Set up a remembrance table or card for staff to write special messages and share fond memories with family members.
- Create a quiet space for staff to take time out.
- Organise discussions with staff about their comfort with death and dying.

- Offer staff opportunities to access free counselling services.
- For home care workers, let them know where their client has been moved when they transfer to residential aged care or hospital.
- Include kitchen, cleaning, and administration staff in rituals because they interact with residents too.

### Identify three actions to get started

What three things will you do to get started with self-care? We've started this list for you.

1. Make your staff aware of the Self-Care Room on the ELDAC website.

What two other actions will you do?

2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Before you start

Before you implement anything, engage your staff. Find out about their needs and preferences. Let them know what you're proposing and get their inputs.



### Self-care

Welcome to the self-care room. A place for aged care workers, with resources to discover and explore, to use now or when needed, to download and share.



*"We work in an industry where we're here to care for others, and often forget to take care of ourselves".*

(RN, RAC)

• • • •



Raise your understanding



Grab and grow



Pause and reflect



Time to plan



Cope with death and dying



For organisations



Explore resources



Why this project

“We work in an industry where we're here to care for others, and often forget to take care of ourselves”.

## Overview of Key Resources

*Raise Your Understanding:* Explains what self care is and isn't.  
Downloadable poster and short explanatory video

*Grab and Grow:* Quick self-care suggestions and an opportunity to share their self-care idea

*Pause and Reflect:* Encourages a quick self-check on their well-being. Able to email it to yourself

*Time to Plan:* Helping users to select a self-care plan (external to ELDAC)

*Cope with Death and Dying:* Recognise they are involved in providing care to people who die. Acknowledge grief and distress

*Caring for your staff matters:* Encourage organisational support for self-care. Includes organisational checklist

*Explore resources:* Offers links to other resources, and information



After release

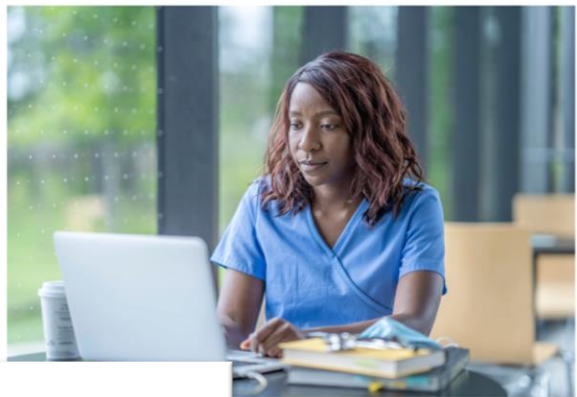
# Release

- Soft launch before Christmas.
- Aged care interest
- Promotions commenced in Mid January
- Positive response from peak bodies





**The Self-Care Room tips may help improve and maintain emotional and mental health.**

## Self-care tool co-developed with aged care workers

aged care workers care for those on the workforce," according to Tieman.

2021, the online tool officially launched. Flinders University's End of Life Centre attracted 2,697 visitors in January.

instrumental in developing the tool, Ms Lane said her colleagues' wellbeing will benefit, and they will be able to do their best care work," said Ms Lane.

provided a plethora of resources in the Self-Care Room. These resources were designed as an opportunity to develop an online space for aged and palliative care."

assessment. "We started talking to


Join our mailing list to receive the latest news and updates from our team.

First name\*

Last name\*

Work Email\*

**SUBMIT**



## Resources are at hand to help you deal with the death of a cherished elder

By Bianca Roberts | May 21, 2022

**Must read**

- Hilltops region relief as new future secured for aged care in Harden**  
October 11, 2022
- It's important we turn the focus inward when reflecting on Arctium Awareness Day**  
October 11, 2022
- NABU workshop on challenges and strategies for identifying patients at risk of dying**  
October 11, 2022
- Nurse leadership key driver for solutions to more than 9000 nursing vacancies**  
October 11, 2022

During this Palliative Care Week, it is important for workers to check in with themselves and ask how they are coping with the reality of death in aged care?

Granted, it's often a distressing topic, but some of the country's leading aged care researchers from Flinders University have been working hard to develop resources to help.

End of Life Directions for Aged Care (ELDAC) is a national specialist palliative care and advance care planning advisory service.

After extensive consultation with the aged care workforce, an online 'Self-Care Room' has been added to the ELDAC website to support workers grieving the loss of cherished elders in their care.

Professor Jennifer Tieman, a Matthew Flinders Fellow inaugural director of the Research Centre in Palliative Care, Death and Dying at Flinders University, tells Aged Care News that these resources were developed to provide some much needed care to emotionally fatigued workers.

"We wanted to acknowledge that actually, in aged care, dying does occur ... so that people were aware that it is OK to feel sad, that someone who you cared for, with whom you had a relationship over time,

## Six month Usage

	Users	New Users	Sessions	Pageviews	Pages / Session	Number of Sessions per User
Jan 2022	1,115	959	1,277	5,340	4.18	1.15
Feb 2022	1,788	1,572	1,985	7,426	3.74	1.11
Mar 2022	1,183	924	1,373	6,028	4.39	1.16
Apr 2022	309	225	360	1,477	4.1	1.17
May 2022	862	704	1,188	3,494	2.94	1.38
Jun 2022	392	233	383	1,379	3.6	0.98
<b>YTD</b>	<b>5,649</b>	<b>4,617</b>	<b>6,566</b>	<b>25,144</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>1.16</b>

## Evaluation Study



Completed 6 interviews and analysis of 25 surveys

### What is one important thing that you do for self-care?"

Physical Domain	<p>Deep breath</p> <p>I exercise every day with an activity that is fun, like roller skating or gardening.</p> <p>I learnt to establish and maintain health boundaries around my time when not at work</p>
Professional	<p>Take my lunch break aware from my work environment</p> <p>If possible, I takes my breaks near the water or somewhere quiet with a nice view</p> <p>Working from home I set reminders on my Google Home to tell me to get up and have a break.</p>
Relational	<p>Visit my Grandkids. They will always make life good.</p>
Emotional	<p>On days off I go away ... stay overnight in an Air b &amp;b, explore new neighbourhoods, beaches</p> <p>I walk outside around by the ocean when I can. I take time to feel my emotions and try and let them go.</p>
Psychological	<p>A positive playlist on Spotify</p> <p>When a resident passes, I confirm to myself that I personally made a meaningful and positive difference.</p>
Spiritual	<p>Go out into fresh air and notice nature, even if it's a brief moment or two.</p> <p>I work on my land</p>

## Next Steps

Creation of a Covid page based on workforce comments and concerns and mechanisms for coping

Update of self-care tips from the floor

Development of organisational support pages

Possible scoping review of CALD perspectives and needs

Finalisation of evaluation framework and ethics for post release survey and interviews

## Acknowledgements

Project Team: Dr Anna Lane (research), Eric Yang (digital), Melissa Norris & Jane Durbridge (visuals and promotion)

Expert Advisory Group: Dr Jason Mills, Kate Swetenham, Ilsa Hampton, Katie Snell, Karen Clifton, Prof Jennifer Tieman

Sincere thanks to the eleven sector participants in design interviews, seven sector participants involved in show and share sessions, four residential aged care staff involved in a facility focus group, and sixteen people involved in user testing.

Thank you also to those who completed post release surveys and interviews

Thank to Dr Juliana Christian who supported the post release evaluation study.





## Stay in Touch

- ELDAC newsletter
- @ELDAC\_agedcare
- [eldac.project@flinders.edu.au](mailto:eldac.project@flinders.edu.au).

[www.eldac.com.au](http://www.eldac.com.au)



ELDAC is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health