



# Tips for Careworkers: Quality of Life with Change and Deterioration

**What it is:** Quality of Life (QoL) is how a person feels about their life in relation to their goals, hopes, fears, values, and beliefs. So, QoL will mean different things to different people. It often includes:

- feeling valued and respected
- being comfortable and pain-free
- being able to socialise or spend time with family and friends
- being as independent as possible
- not feeling like a burden
- feeling supported.

**Why it matters:** QoL is part of palliative care. As a person's illness deteriorates their QoL can worsen. Their ability to do what is important to them can change.

Standards 1 and 4 of the Aged Care Quality Standards also emphasise QoL.

**What I need to know:** QoL is personal. What the older person values as part of QoL may not be the same as other people.

As their disease progresses, their QoL can change. The disease might stop them from doing their usual activities. It might mean they cannot socialise in the same way or form relationships with others. Changes in QoL may be slow with diseases like dementia that progress slowly (over a longer period).

Other people might not register a change in QoL. They may adapt to what is currently possible and not compare it to what they could do before.

## Do

Talk with the person and family

- Regularly ask what is now important to the older person and their family
- Talk with the older person to set individual goals and support them with activities that are meaningful to them
- If families are concerned, ask your supervisor to help you support family members with information about the changes
- Help the older person to stay connected with family and friends
- If language is a barrier, ask your supervisor if there are staff who speak their language.

## Do

Support the older person to maintain their spiritual perspectives and spiritual connections.

## Do

Encourage them to remain active with tasks that they can manage.

- If tasks become more difficult offer help rather than doing it for them
- Help the person to adapt personal interests and activities as functional ability changes.

**Name:**

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## My reflections:

What tools are used in my organisation to measure QoL?

How often do I re-assess what is important to the people I care for?

## My notes:

See related palliAGED Practice  
Tip Sheets:  
People with Specific Needs  
Person-Centred Care  
Recognising Deterioration

For references and the latest version of all Tip Sheets visit  
[www.palliaged.com.au/PracticeTipSheets](http://www.palliaged.com.au/PracticeTipSheets)