Ageing – Part of Life’s Rich Tapestry

Mornington Peninsula residents share their experiences of ageing.

August 2011
Acknowledgements

This resource was developed by the community for the community by the Mornington Peninsula Shire with the assistance of Peninsula Health Community Health.

The Mornington Peninsula Shire would like to thank the following:

The committee members who contributed to the development, formatting and editing of this resource:

- Bambi Hanson, PACE representative
- Glen Fidler, PACE representative
- Libby Wilson, U3A Mornington & Community Renewal Rosebud West representative
- Karyn Seymour, Project Officer, Health Promotion Team, Peninsula Health
- The community members from the Mornington Peninsula area who have contributed their stories.
- The health professionals who have provided information within the resource.

The Mornington Peninsula Shire acknowledges the Boonwurrung / Bunurong, members of the Kulin nation, who have traditional connections to and responsibilities for the land and water of the Mornington Peninsula.

Cover features images from the Wildscapes Earth Blanket, created in 2008 by women from the Hastings community with the support and direction of community artist Pamela Farmer. This artwork was created by the community for the community as part of the Wildscapes of Warringine community arts and environment project which explored the connection between the natural world, community arts and health and well being.

Printed on 100% recycled paper
Foreword

‘You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream’

C.S. Lewis

This resource aims to explore some of the common experiences that often accompany ageing through the eyes of Mornington Peninsula residents.

Growing older does not mean that you can’t enjoy life or make a meaningful contribution to society. The vast majority of people do.

However, the real life stories in this resource introduce you to some of the changes that you may experience with ageing. Some changes are a natural part of ageing while others may not be.

The Mornington Peninsula has a vast range of support and services for older people. Some of these are mentioned throughout this magazine.

Any information that is on a coloured background has been provided by a health professional, or a professional organisation.

Stories on a white background have been provided by community members.

* indicates that the person’s name has been changed

# indicates that the story is an anecdotal story
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grief, Loss and Depression</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression is not a normal part of ageing. Learn how others have coped with losing a spouse and other situations in life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Health</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual enjoyment is possible at any age. Read stories of people who have overcome erectile dysfunction, prostate cancer and other changes associated with ageing to achieve a healthy sex life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drug and Alcohol</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol affects people differently as they age and can interact with medications. Hear about people’s experiences and find out what services are available.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling can have a huge impact on individuals and their families. Locals share how they have overcome problem gambling behaviour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring for others</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether it’s a spouse, an adult child or someone else you’re caring for it is important to look after yourself. Read about how others take time for themselves.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elder Abuse</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn where to get help if you find yourself in a situation where you are not being treated correctly by a trusted friend or family.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting to Retirement</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes retirement isn’t quite what people expect. Local residents share some the unexpected experiences they faced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Remember the good times

My husband and I were together for 24 years. He was a dialysis patient and needed a lot of care. Although he had a limited life expectancy he was mentally very strong. He encouraged me to join clubs.

By establishing activities in my own life it gave me a degree of independence. In a way, he helped me to share my grief with him.

Having a role as a volunteer gave me a reason to keep going. I was still needed. All was not lost. Someone else still depended on my help and this was good healing.

I formed friendships in my many activities such as walking groups and dancing. I even joined a gym. You would be surprised at the number of people similar to you.

My advice to anyone who has lost a spouse is to join several groups. It provides a purpose for life as everyone needs to be needed. It’s not that you don’t miss your loved one, but life goes on. Remember your spouse for all the good times, celebrate the fact that you knew them and that they were a part of your life.

Cynthia, aged 62

Keeping involved on the Mornington Peninsula

The Mornington Peninsula is an ideal location for seniors. It has a vast choice of activities for older people.

There are a range of groups to join such as Probus and Rotary as well as lifelong learning opportunities through U3A and Neighbourhood Houses. There are also a number of leisure groups such as walking, art and craft groups and much more. Senior Citizen Centres provide a wide range of activities such as bowls, exercise, cards, craft and lunches.

There is also a broad array of volunteering opportunities available. The next page highlights two services that can help you get involved in volunteering.
Be the difference
volunteer today!

For all who live, work and play on the Mornington Peninsula!

Looking for Volunteering Opportunities? or Volunteers?

No access to the internet?
Walk into your local library or shire customer services at Hastings, Rosebud, Mornington or Somerville today and ask for assistance or phone 1300 850 600

-log onto our website
www.volmornpen.com.au

Volunteering at Peninsula Health
Community Participation

Peninsula Health values Volunteers

Volunteers help in many services across the Peninsula Health sites. They can be found in wards, gardens, emergency departments, kiosks, activity rooms, offices and meeting rooms.

Through their tireless efforts Volunteers at Peninsula Health make an enormous difference to both the quality and effectiveness of care provided.

Contact: Helen Wilson, Community Participation
Ph. 03 9788 1536  E-mail: hwilson@phcn.vic.gov.au
Web: www.peninsulahealth.org.au
What did you find helpful in your toughest times?

Mornington Peninsula residents share their personal experiences of grief

‘My daughter suffered from depression which was hard on me. My advice would be to live one day at a time.

Use the things that make you feel good such as music, cards and social situations to get through tough times. Help out others by sending cards and sharing your story’

Rosalie, aged 67

‘I use distractions such as catching up with friends or playing bowls. I go to the GP regularly & try to keep my health on track.

I keep busy through craft, cooking & exercise. To make something yourself gives you a feeling of pride & accomplishment.’

Marjorie, aged 88

‘My faith and believing in myself helped me get through. I had the support of a good friend and really found that talking helped as after you lose someone you can’t think for yourself.’

Jean
Need help with grief, loss or depression?

The experience of loss can take many forms. It might be the death of a loved one, a relationship breakdown, separation from loved ones, or a major change brought about by loss of job, ill health or change of residence.

Often loss is followed by a period of grief where feelings of disbelief, confusion, anger, sadness and a sense of isolation are common. These are all normal reactions to a challenging experience.

Staying connected with friends and loved ones, managing day-to-day stress, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle are all important at this time.

Sometimes grief is prolonged or very intense and people prefer to seek professional support to help them through this difficult period.

Pat O’Leary
Counsellor
Peninsula Health Community Health

Counselling, Peninsula Health Community Health
A broad range of counselling services are available free of charge including family or individual counselling. There are also group programs available for anxiety management; life’s transitions and pain management.

Peninsula Health Community Health ACCESS - 1300 665 781

Beyond Blue
1300 22 4636 www.beyondblue.org.au
The Mornington Peninsula Shire is pleased to launch the **2011 Community Information Directory**.

Listing a wide range of groups, clubs and services you are bound to find something for you.

Pick up your **free** copy from:

- Mornington Peninsula Shire's Customer Service offices in Hastings, Rosebud, Mornington or Somerville.
- Community Support and Information Centres located in Hastings, Rosebud and Mornington.

Or search the online version at [www.mornpen.vic.gov.au](http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au) (under ‘your community’)

---

**Koori Support on the Peninsula**

Koori support is available for Mornington Peninsula residents from a number of organisations, some of these include:

Mornington Peninsula Shire Aboriginal Support and Development Team 1300 850 600

Peninsula GP Network - Aboriginal Health Program and Outreach Support 9708 8019

Peninsula Health Community Health Koori Services Team 9784 8100

Bunurong Healthy Lifestyle Team - Tackling Smoking, Nutrition and Physical Activity 5979 1952

Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association - 0438 077 596
One condition, two very different stories

Ean’s story

Many years ago, at 68, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. The recommended treatment was castration and radiation. My cancer was cured but the side effects remain including impotence, cessation of my sex life and effects from hormone deprivation.

I battled depression from all of this. I joined a prostate cancer support group and sought help from the Cancer Council.

I have been a support group secretary for ten years and recommend that prostate cancer patients attend a support group, particularly before treatment.

My cure was at a massive cost. Luckily there is better treatment available today. I would advise anyone diagnosed with prostate cancer not to rush into treatment but to research thoroughly and seek several medical opinions prior to starting any treatment.

Jack’s story, aged 62

I was shocked when my doctor told me I had prostate cancer. Fortunately for me it was detected early as I was having regular PSA tests.

I was a suitable candidate for brachytherapy which involves implanting ‘radioactive seeds’ into the prostate.

After the treatment I had some short term side effects including urine frequency. The doctor told me that the risk of impotence was 30%.

I found I did have sexual potency problems and my doctor suggested I try medication. It has been a success for me and given me and my partner the confidence to return to intimacy.

Even if you feel embarrassed to discuss these matters it is worth it as sometimes the solution is just a small tablet.
What to expect with ageing

As men age, testosterone levels decline, causing changes in sexual functioning.

Some changes you may notice include:

- A reduction in secretions
- The weight and volume of the testes may increase
- More intense stimulation may be required to gain an erection
- Less firm erection
- Longer time needed to attain erection
- Increased difficulty to regain erection if lost
- Responses of excitement may be less intense

These changes are a natural part of ageing and should not deter you from having sex. You can still enjoy orgasm although it may be less intense.

Periodic difficulties with erection and ejaculation do not always mean that you suffer from erectile dysfunction. If you are having concerns, speak to your GP.

_Nursing for Wellness in Older People, Carol A Miller_

_Andrology Australia_ provides information to the community on disorders of the male reproductive health system and associated problems. For information contact 1300 303 878 or visit [www.andrologyaustralia.org](http://www.andrologyaustralia.org)
Erectile dysfunction doesn’t necessarily mean the end

My husband John became impotent. Because of this we did not engage in sex for a few years. One day he went to see his doctor who gave him medication to help with his impotence.

When we tried intercourse again, it was very painful. It had never hurt previously. I knew that I was dryer than I had been but I did not realise that this would have an impact on intercourse.

I went to see my GP who explained to me some of the changes my body had been through.

With John taking his medication, me using lubrication and trying some different positions, we are now able to enjoy intercourse again.

It’s not as often as when we were younger but that suits us both just fine.

Beth*, aged 64

Of the conditions I live with including diabetes, depression and high blood pressure, erectile dysfunction was the one that affected me most.

Sex with my partner decreased, the desire was there but I became frustrated when I could not achieve an erection. This really put a strain on the relationship.

One day we went to see our doctor together. There are lots of treatments and aids available including tablets, injections and mechanical aids. We found what has worked for us.

I would suggest to anyone having trouble to speak to your doctor, look into all options and consider what is covered on the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme.

Graham*, aged 67

Erectile dysfunction affects 1 in 5 men. For free resources and information contact Andrology Australia on 1300 303 878 or www.andrologyaustralia.org
Sexual enjoyment, possible at any age

With ageing, natural changes occur in the body. Older people are still capable of enjoying orgasm but the response to sexual stimulation is often slower, less intense and of shorter duration.

Sexual interest and competency does not necessarily decline, but frequency of sexual activity generally declines.

There are many reasons that may lead to decreased interest in sex including:

- Effects of medications or alcohol
- Changes in the body
- Feelings of shame or embarrassment

It is important to seek advice from a professional if you are having concerns with sexual functioning. Your first contact point should be your GP who may refer you to another professional.

Nursing for Wellness in Older People
Carol A Miller

You may not get pregnant but...

Although contraception may no longer be required, it is possible to contract a sexually transmitted infection at any age.

If you are having intercourse with multiple partners, whether male or female, it is important to use a condom. This helps to prevent the spread of infection.

If you think you may have a sexually transmitted infection, speak to your GP. Most infections are easily treated.

Remember that some sexually transmitted infections do not have any visible symptoms. Before having sex with any new partner you should be checked by your GP (it may involve a urine sample or a blood test).

www.healthinaging.org/public_education/safe_sex_tips.pdf
If we hide our truth, we can’t expect others to know who we are

Being a lesbian can pose some challenges including isolation due to living alone, having a disapproving family. For those who don’t have children, you can be left with no one to care for you and also be more susceptible to breast cancer than those who have children^.

I am in my early 70s and now have a partner after being on my own for many years. For my partner and I, it was important for our relationship and intentions to be legally documented. This will avoid any uncertainty as to whether my partner or my family have the rights to make medical decisions during a medical crisis.

It is an adjustment to stand up for your rights as a couple and to have your partnership respected by friends and family.

Luckily for us, we have been treated with respect and received excellent care when we have been cared for at Peninsula Health.

I view ageing as a series of adjustments that need to be accepted and dealt with creatively. As the body gets more rigid the mind has to become more flexible.

The younger generations can show us oldies the way by being out and proud. It is important to know what lesbian-friendly resources are available and to feel confident in accessing help. There is support for every situation; it is just a matter of asking someone for help.

The changes I experience with age are not impacted by my sexual preference. I still experience reduced oestrogen impacting on tissue health and the ease of sexual expression. The upside of ageing is you don’t have to sweat the small things – peer group pressure is not the same (natural attrition!).

Changes after menopause

After menopause women may experience the following changes:

- Thinning of the vaginal wall
- Less vaginal lubrication during sexual activity
- A reduction in pubic hair
- The labia lose their fullness
- Breasts have more fat

Using a water-soluble lubricant may be useful if you experience dryness. This is available from your local supermarket or chemist (do not use petroleum jelly as it is not effective and also can predispose you to infection).

Thinning of the vaginal wall can lead to irritation or urinary tract infection.

The following can help prevent these problems:

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Use oestrogen cream or lubricant
- Maintain good hygiene in the vaginal area
- Trying different positions may help ease discomfort
- Empty your bladder before and after intercourse

_Nursing for Wellness in Older People_

Carol A Miller
New Hope

**PLANNED ACTIVITY GROUPS / SOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM**

Planned Activity Groups (PAGs) provide a range of culturally appropriate activities for seniors. There are two multicultural programs and one Greek specific program. All programs have bi-lingual staff.

New Hope offers a range of activities including:

- Activities in the centre
- Outings
- Freshly prepared hot meals
- Guest speakers
- Celebrations of culturally significant events
- Music and dancing

A small fee is charged to attend our programs. Transport is provided to eligible clients.

You may self refer, or be referred by family and friends or health/community service professionals.

**VOLUNTEER COORDINATION PROGRAM**

The Volunteer Coordination program is the only service of its kind in the area which meets the sensitive needs of the ageing CALD population.

It assists elderly residents who are socially isolated to reconnect with the community.

Volunteers visit clients in their homes for friendly support and assistance with transport to medical appointments, Centrelink, shopping, church and social activities.

Volunteers provide an important link to their respective communities and the broader community.

Volunteers are of various ages and cultural backgrounds and are matched to clients who speak the same language and share their culture.

All volunteers are provided with appropriate training and support and undergo a police check.

Please telephone our Multicultural Social Support Program Coordinator Mavra Vakalis for more information.
Mb: 0409 421 876
Web: www.newhope.asn.au
I’m not alone anymore

At first drinking helped me feel more confident. I had buddies at the pub and I felt in control. I gradually needed to drink earlier in the day and I made sure I had a business lunch on most days.

I once had a good business, a family, a nice home and friends.

Over time my health got worse. In hospital I was given a case worker who was very helpful. She assisted me to get decent accommodation and suggested I join the local AA.

I am no longer alone; I have friends to help me through.

I haven’t had a drink for over 2 years. It’s been tough but it’s worth it. The best thing is that my children now trust me and come to visit. I am now retraining in computers at TAFE.

I try not to look back but I now wish I had sought help earlier.

Bruce*

Drinking alcohol has many benefits. It can help you relax, improve the taste of food or act as a social lubricant.

However, as we age we become more sensitive to the effects of alcohol due to changes in the body associated ageing.

The time that it takes for the body to process alcohol increases, meaning that drinking the same amount of alcohol will have a greater effect.

Drinking alcohol when on some medications can cause serious health problems. Certain health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, gout, & hypertension can be made worse by drinking alcohol.

Always check with your doctor to make sure your medications and alcohol don’t become a deadly cocktail.
After a few years of drinking
I found it impossible to stop

I started drinking when my husband of 25 years died suddenly. I drank to mask my feelings of loneliness and anxiety. After a few years of drinking I found it impossible to stop.

I went to a rehab facility but I relapsed after being sober for about 18 months. After that I did a detox in hospital and was then introduced to the PenDAP^ program.

‘I drank to mask my feelings of loneliness and anxiety’

I began seeing a counsellor from the OWL^ program which made a huge difference to me. I could at last express my true feelings.

I attended AA^ meetings four times per week and continued to see my counsellor, read AA literature and socialise with members of AA.

Since I started receiving this support my confidence and self esteem has increased. I am less anxious and am enjoying the simple things in life once again.

My advice to anyone who is struggling or concerned with drinking is to seek support. I think a lot of people in my age group think we can fix everything on our own, but through my experience, outside help works.

It is important to admit to yourself you have a serious problem and through help you can once again have a happy and meaningful life.

Anne, aged 64

^See description over page
**Need help with drugs or alcohol?**

**PenDAP (Peninsula Drug and Alcohol Program), Peninsula Health Community Health**

PenDAP provides a range of support and counselling for anyone experiencing difficulties with alcohol and other drug issues.

To find out more or make a referral please contact Peninsula Health Community Health ACCESS - 1300 665 781

**OWL (Older Wiser Lifestyles) Program, Peninsula Health**

The OWL program is an Alcohol and Other Drug service for adults aged over 60. OWL offers individually-tailored treatment comprised of education, early intervention, and counselling.

To find out more or make a referral please contact Peninsula Health Community Health ACCESS - 1300 665 781

**Salvation Army**

The Salvos offer a range of services for alcohol, gambling and substance abuse recovery programs including detox programs and other support.

To find out more contact the Salvation Army on 9784 5000 or visit [www.salvationarmy.org.au](http://www.salvationarmy.org.au)

**AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)**

AA is a support group for people who want to stop drinking. Members share their stories and support each other through sharing trials and strengths. Meetings are held in many locations including Rosebud, Mt Eliza, Mornington, McCrae and Hastings.

For more information or to find your local meeting place visit [www.aa.org.au](http://www.aa.org.au)
It is better to seek help than to die!

After having a heart attack I was admitted to Frankston Hospital. I had no idea that alcohol could interact with my heart medications until I spoke with someone from the OWL^ program.

With the information and support I have gained I have cut down my alcohol intake. I now drink less because I understand how it can impact on my health. My wife supports me and we have cut down our drinking.

My advice to others it to seek help when you don’t feel 100% - it is better to seek help than to die!

Ian

Mixing medications can be dangerous too

Over 90% of people aged over 65 are taking at least one medication. When taken incorrectly medications can cause adverse effects such as vomiting, diarrhoea and can reduce the effectiveness of other medications.

Important tips to remember:

- Ensure medications are in date
- Ensure your doctor is aware of all medications you are taking (including over the counter medications)
- Do not take a medicine that hasn’t been prescribed for you, even if you have similar symptoms to a friend

National Prescribing Service

Medicines Line

Medicines Line is a telephone service that can provide information to you about medications.

It is not an emergency number - in case of overdose contact 000.

Contact 1300 MEDICINE (1300 633 424)
Free Presentations for Seniors Groups

**Beyond Maturity Blues**
- Depression is not a normal part of ageing
- How to identify depression or anxiety
- Effective treatments available
- How to support someone with depression
- What you can do to stay mentally healthy

**Older Wiser Lifestyles**
- What is “healthwise” drinking and why is it different for each person?
- Alcohol affects us differently as we age
- Alcohol can interact with mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression
- Alcohol can interact badly with certain medications and make some health conditions worse

**Medicines and You**
- Where to find important medicines information
- How to get the most out of visits to the doctor and pharmacist
- How to remember your medicines
- How to save money on medicines
- About generic medicines and if they are an option for you

**Seniors Rights**
- What are the rights of older people?
- What are the different types of elder abuse?
- How to protect yourself from elder abuse
- Enduring Powers of Attorney
- Legal and other options for seniors

For more information or to book a session contact the Health Promotion team at Peninsula Health on 9784 8320 or email healthpromotion@phcn.vic.gov.au
I found out about my husband’s gambling by accident

Opening a bank statement, I thought the bank had made a mistake. A personal loan had been taken out for $20,000.

Not thinking anything of it, I told my husband Sam*. He told me it wasn’t a mistake and that he had taken out the loan to pay for his gambling.

‘When he told me I felt physically sick and completely betrayed’

When he told me I felt physically sick and completely betrayed but Sam seemed relieved. It was a secret he had held for months and it was a weight off his shoulders - this made me even more angry.

I didn’t know what to say to him. I spoke to a counsellor from Gambler’s Help who helped me a lot.

She encouraged me to talk to Sam about his gambling. I also made sure he got help.

We told some of Sam’s closest friends who have been very supportive.

Sam’s gambling has lead to many long term effects including a loss of trust between us. The house has been changed into my name which was a huge blow for Sam.

I know we will never be the same. There is a long road ahead of us but the counsellor has enabled me to be supportive for Sam and to get the support I need.

Maggie
I earned over $100,000 but was on the verge of bankruptcy

A few years back, I hit rock-bottom. I was earning over $100,000 a year but was on the verge of bankruptcy. I was addicted to pokie machines; I suffered sleeplessness and had a deep sense of despair.

I watched Dr Phil one day - it was about people in America with money and relationship problems. He suggested that people start all over again and write down everything – where the money has gone, interest rates of the credit cards etc.

‘You don’t know the whole situation until you write it all down’

A few months later, I did write it all down. Not just finance but other things, such as the impact on my kids, my life etc.

You don’t know the whole situation until you write it down. If you don’t write it down, you just think about it a little bit and think it is okay.

I wrote on two pieces of paper: one titled ‘things that have gone wrong’ and the other ‘things I would like’. I then saw a counsellor and showed him these two pieces of paper.

Over a period of 8 months, with the assistance of a financial counsellor, I managed to negotiate with and pay off half my creditors. I am now even ahead in my payments on my mortgage.

I have also changed my lifestyle which has been a gradual process. I now participate in activities other than gambling and this has helped me meet new friends.

I am glad I sought help before I got any lower - I was lucky I didn’t lose my house. I like to look back on the ‘things that have gone wrong’ list as 95% of things have been wiped off the list.

James
Writing helped get me through

Sabina writes to reflect on things happening in her life. Just prior to her husband dying she wrote about her experience with poker machines:

‘The escapism of the pictures rushing in front of my eyes, the chase is exciting. One, two icons fall down but not a third. The person sitting next to you wins big or maybe they lose and look depressed, angry or drugged. Anything but happy. I slip in another $20 note hoping for a high.

After 18 months Sabina is starting to feel the benefits of not gambling, she writes:

‘I am improving, I re-read the article I wrote before Marcus died. I can look at this from where I am now, see the hurt and feel comfortable with the present time.’

Common indicators of problem gambling:

• Do you bet more than you can really afford?
• Do you go back another day to try to win back the money you lost?
• Do you borrow money or sell things to get money to gamble?
• Do you feel that you might have a problem with gambling?
• Do people tell you that you have a gambling problem?
• Do you feel guilty about the way you gamble?
• Does your gambling cause you stress or anxiety?
• Does your gambling cause any financial problems for you or your household?

The Inside Pokies, Player Guide, Gambler’s Help
**Need help with problem gambling behaviour?**

Here are some tips to help you overcome problem gambling behaviour:

- Get involved in projects such as jobs around your home or garden. These can provide a sense of achievement or distraction from the urge to gamble and help you to rediscover old skills or develop new ones.

- Reward yourself for not gambling, you may want to save up the money you would have gambled to buy something you really want. This will affirm your new journey and support a sense of feeling good. It can also help you to revalue money.

- Surround yourself with the support you need. Join a support group or share with a counsellor or close friend. This can assist your journey by encouraging goal setting, greater control of finances, increased interest in other activities, plus healthier lifestyles and relationships.

If you, or someone close to you, is struggling with problem gambling behaviour, there is help available.

**Gambler’s Help Southern**

Gambler’s Help provides counselling and support for people with problem gambling behaviour and their family. Financial counselling is also available. The services are free, confidential and professional. There are offices in Rosebud and Frankston.

For more information contact 9575 5353 or visit

[www.ghsouthern.org.au](http://www.ghsouthern.org.au)

24 hour telephone service - 1800 858 858
Peninsula Health has a range of services available for older people. Many of these are mentioned throughout this resource, others include:

**ACCESS**

Ph 9788 1377

Your one point of contact for all Aged Care and Rehabilitation enquiries. Via this number you can be referred to a range of services including:

- Personal Alarm Call Service
- Continence Clinic
- Falls Prevention Service
- Physiotherapy
- Aids and Equipment
- Exercise Programs
- Community Rehabilitation Program and much more

**Aged Persons Mental Health Service**

Ph 1300 792 977

This service provides a comprehensive mental health service for people aged over 65 who require assessment and/or treatment for psychiatric illness and severe behavioural problems associated with dementia.

Referral to the service can be made by contacting the 24 hour Mental Health Triage Service, non-urgent referrals to the service should be made in business hours while crisis referrals can be made outside of business hours.

www.peninsulahealth.org.au
The reward far outweighs the challenges

Mary* shares her experience of caring for her husband

Life had always been pretty good. We had our own business, I worked part time and we were looking forward to retiring and travelling.

Plans changed when my husband became ill. We sold our business, I reduced my work and we moved house so I could be close to home if needed.

With the help of our GP, we filled in the forms and went to Centrelink who were helpful, suggesting I apply for the Carer’s pension and allowance.

For about six years I was able to continue working part time while caring for my husband. His condition worsened and he was becoming more dependent on me.

At times I feel angry and resentful but I mostly feel sad to see my once strong husband being so dependent in many ways.

It concerns me that our grandchildren feel they need to help and worry for their Poppy.

I cope with the support of my family, friends, neighbours and our church.

I still make time for myself to catch up with friends and pursue my own interests. Perhaps it is fortunate that my needs are simple. Sometimes I feel envious of friends as they head off travelling.

Although it is challenging it is also rewarding as I get to keep my loved one at home and not in care.
Who looks after you as a carer?

Marj shares her experience of caring for her daughter

I have been very tired lately. Jeanie is 50 years old now and we are working through the emotional task of future planning. There is so much paperwork - it overwhelms me.

For years, I have been involved with Frankston and Peninsula Carers Inc. At last, with support from council & carer agencies, we have succeeded in having a facility built to accommodate adult children with disabilities. We now wait and hope our own children can access this facility.

The group members provide great support; it’s good to talk to parents facing the same difficult issues.

Caring has been a constant in my life. Having diabetes, renal failures and a successful kidney transplant, my husband finally succumbed to a rare bacterial infection. I also cared for my ageing mother during this time.

Jeanie has had multiple disabilities since birth. She is affectionate, talkative, anxious and demanding. She is my dear companion but she requires constant monitoring, transport and entertaining.

Recently a carer support worker introduced me to an opportunity to take time for myself and enjoy painting again.

It is good to set myself a new goal. I feel I’ve made a community contribution for the sake of my daughter and have found something special for myself.
Seeking help is not a weakness

Caring for others can be complex and demanding, it is important for carers to maintain their own health and wellbeing. There are services available to provide carers with some of the support you may need to achieve this.

Each person’s experience of caring is different and may be enhanced by the provision of information, linking into community services, respite, education, training or counselling.

Accessing carer services is not a sign of weakness or giving up responsibility, it is an absolute requirement for anyone who has a significant caring role. Often a carer’s biggest hurdle is overcoming thinking that they must do it all themselves.

You need to take time out

Local residents share how they take time out.

My husband Jack attends the Men’s Shed for a day a week - this gives me time to catch up with friends and pursue my own interests.

We also attend movie nights which we both enjoy.

Margaret

I attend a respite program with Peninsula Arts Society. Going out allows me to focus on something else. It puts me in another place and I enjoy the experience.

No one cares that I am a carer. I am there to do something different, something for me. I am in a wonderful little oasis in the middle of a desert – a bright spot.

Marjorie
Mum’s a different person now but we still share a sense of humour

I was used to having mum around, she moved in with us after dad passed away. Four years ago she was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s type dementia. At the time, mum was assessed by MEACAS^ and approved for high level respite care.

We wanted to keep mum at home for as long as possible so I cut work down to part time.

Mum has behaviours of concern meaning she gets disoriented confused, and can be physically or verbally aggressive. This has escalated over time.

We have always got on really well but there are days when coping is a challenge. Luckily, there is a lot out there to help us. I just did not know about it.

Through CRCCSR^ I have access to workers who give me strategies to help with mum’s behaviour. I have attended workshops where I have learnt so much from the trainers and others in a similar position.

Mum attends a community care facility which gives us both a break! We’ve even left mum to go interstate. I really do find that if I am stressed, it’s no help to mum.

With trial and error and taking advantage of what is offered, I have managed to find some time for myself – this has made us both happier.

^See page 30 for details

Is someone close to you losing their memory?

The Cognitive Dementia and Memory Service (CDAMS) is a diagnostic service for people who are concerned about memory loss or changes in thinking.

CDAMS will assess the person and refer them for appropriate treatment and support.

To access the CDAMS service, based in Mt Eliza, contact ACCESS at Peninsula Health on 9788 1377
Need help as a carer?

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre Southern Region (CRCCSR)
The CRCCSR provides respite and practical and emotional support for carers in the southern suburbs of Melbourne. It also works in partnership with health and community services to help meet the needs of carers through a range of activities such as information provision, referral, respite coordination and respite planning.

The first point of contact is CareLine – a telephone service for carers. CareLine can assist with information, support, planned short term and urgent respite.

For more information FREECALL* 1800 052 222

CareLine Carer Support and Respite (24 Hours)
Community Information (Business Hours)
* Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates

www.carersouth.org.au

Mt Eliza Aged Care Assessment Service (MEACAS)
MEACAS assess the needs of older people and determine their care needs to keep them living at home as long as possible. It assists with linking you in to the appropriate services and provide information about aged care.

Contact 9788 1276

Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA)
The DVA have a vast range of resources available for carers including information, DVDs and links to a range of services that may benefit you.

Aged and Disability Services

The Aged & Disability Services team provides older people and people with disabilities a range of services to enable them to live independently in their own home. Services include:

- Information, assessment and referral
- General home care (assistance with household tasks)
- Respite care
- Delivered meals (home delivered, nutritious meals)
- Home maintenance (practical assistance with property maintenance and installation of aids/equipment for a safe environment)
- Community transport (support for those unable to access public transport)
- Activity program (for people with dementia and associated disorders)
- Personal care (assistance for people with personal and hygiene needs)

Services have sliding fee scales based on income and capacity to pay.

For more information or to refer yourself or someone else for our services contact 1300 850 600.

Disability Services & Information Resource Guide

This guide lists over 270 agencies that supply disability services to residents of the Mornington Peninsula.

Get your free copy by contacting Elaine Hall-Foote, Disability-Community Inclusion Project Officer (MetroAccess). Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Phone: 5950 1630 or 0437 104 956
Web: www.mornpen.vic.gov.au
Email: hallel@mornpen.vic.gov.au
I am terrified of what my own son might do to me

Michael* and Lorna* are in their eighties. Their son Simon*, aged 50, was diagnosed with schizophrenia in his teen years. He has lived with Michael and Lorna for most of his life.

Lorna and Michael have suffered violence and threats at the hands of Simon. Lorna describes the series of attacks by her son against Michael over the past 30 years. “It got worse and in later years he would break up furniture. He loved breaking glass and would pick up the nearest thing and throw it.”

Over the past few years Simon had also began to be violent towards Lorna. At one stage he was arrested for assaulting Michael and the police.

His bail conditions prevented Simon from returning home. However he pressured his parents into allowing him to move back home and to pay his fine.

Michael and Lorna have been reluctant to seek help as they do not wish for their son to be punished.

You need to look after yourself

Abuse is a complex problem and everyone’s situation is unique.

Personal beliefs and professional values, social, cultural and family experiences all influence perception of what is considered abuse or neglect of older people.

It is important that if you are being abused that you seek help and support. It can be difficult, particularly if it is a family member or close friend, but you are not alone and support is available.

See page 35 for details on local services.
Dementia turned my husband abusive

Vern and I have been married for 52 years, we have four children and had a loving relationship. We rarely said a cross word to each other, I waited on him and he would often spoil me with treats and flowers.

At 80 years old, Vern was diagnosed with dementia. This changed him completely. If I wasn’t watching he would walk out the front door and wander the street. If his routine was not followed, Vern would get stressed and throw things at me.

When I was cooking he would be in the kitchen following me. This became a hazard for both of us. I began to set him up in the lounge room in front of the TV while I cooked his dinner.

One day he walked out the front door and was nearly hit by a car. This was a real shock and I didn’t know what to do. At times I wondered if the only way to keep him safe would be to tie him to a chair.

A concerned neighbour called the local council to find out what help was available for me. I had no idea that there were services available. I started to receive home help through the council and was relieved to be provided regular respite.

I joined a carers’ support group that encouraged me to tell our children of the issues I was facing.

For the first time in years I enjoyed a holiday while Vern went into residential respite.

The children now help out and I continue to receive support from the carers’ support group. I am waiting to receive some more assistance through an aged care package.

It is important to access the help that is available, it certainly helped me.

*Marg*, aged 77
My son took all I had and left me homeless

I was living in the home where we had raised our family. My son and daughter in law wanted to buy a new house. They asked me if I could loan them $200,000 to make their dream come true.

They promised that I could live with them, so I sold the house and gave them the money. They bought their new house and I moved in with them.

This arrangement worked well until they started to ask for more money. I kept giving it to them but they never paid it back. Our relationship started to become strained. I had to stop going out as I couldn’t afford it.

I asked them to repay me some of the money they had borrowed and they told me I had to move out immediately.

I had no assets and no money left from the sale of my home. I went to see my GP and told him everything. He advised me to contact a legal service that was able to recover some of the money.

I stayed with a friend for a few months and was eventually able to purchase a small unit in a retirement village.

Beryl*, aged 68

---

**Elder Abuse - it’s not just physical**

Elder abuse is any act within a relationship, where there is an expectation of trust, which results in harm or distress to an older person.

The act may be a one-off or may occur repeatedly.

There are six main types of abuse that can occur to an older person.

- Financial
- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological or emotional
- Social
- Neglect
**Need help with elder abuse?**

No matter what our age, we have the right to live safely in our own homes, to live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. We all have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and the right to make our own decisions based on informed choice.

There are many services available to help an older person who maybe a victim of abuse. If you are concerned about someone you know or concerned about your own situation, please contact the following numbers for support.

**Seniors Right Victoria**
Seniors Rights Victoria provides information and support relating to elder abuse. They have a range of experienced legal advisers and advocates provide a welcoming and confidential environment in which to discuss experiences and plan a course of action.

1300 368 821 Monday – Friday 10.00am – 5.00pm.

**Mornington Peninsula Shire Aged Care Services**
There is a vast range of services available for older people through Mornington Peninsula Shire. Services include home care and maintenance, personal care, respite care and adult day activities as well as delivered meals.

1300 850 600 Monday - Friday 8.30am - 5.00pm

**Support for those experiencing Elder Abuse**
Mornington Peninsula Domestic Violence Service - 5971 9454
Men’s Line - 1300 789 978

Women’s Domestic Violence Crisis Service - 1800 015 188

**Support for those committing Elder Abuse**
Peninsula Health Community Health ACCESS - 1300 665 781
I would go to the supermarket to chat with the checkout ladies

Until recently my husband and I spent all of our time working in very demanding management jobs, running a business on the side and caring for our family.

Aged 55, and with our family now independent and the business closed, we decided to make a lifestyle change. We retired and fulfilled our sea change dream and moved down to the Peninsula.

Whilst we were very happy with the new living arrangement, we didn’t know anyone in the local community and life got very lonely. This may not sound much of a problem but at the age of 55 and with a whole lot of time on our hands we felt socially isolated.

It soon became evident to me that unless one had an interest to participate in a sport or hobby or had a dog to walk, it was very difficult to meet people and develop friendships.

In our busy working lives there was never any time for clubs or hobbies so we faced a real dilemma.

We considered joining a sport group, developing a hobby or even investing in a dog but for all the wrong reasons. We even thought about joining a senior citizens club but, with all due respect, at 55 and just retired we weren’t ready for that.

I found myself going down to the local supermarket just to chat with the checkout ladies.

I saw an advertisement for a local friendship group and we went along (feeling a little nervous) to investigate and we joined the club.

We have met lots of lovely locals and developed many valued friendships. I learnt from friends in the club that a local Community Centre was looking for volunteers so I took the opportunity and now thoroughly enjoy giving my time to help in our community.

Lyn, aged 56
Retirement was not quite what we expected

Husband and wife, Jim & Maree* have had very different experiences of adjusting to retirement.

Jim shares:

The first few years were exciting. I enjoyed being able to relax and travel but the novelty soon wore off.

I find it hard living on the pension and at times it limits me doing what I want to do.

The home had always been Maree’s domain and I feel I have nowhere to escape and do my own thing. I don’t always feel comfortable at home as I feel I get in Maree’s way.

I often also find myself bored.

Fortunately, Jim and Maree have found that taking up interests and joining in activities has been helpful. Maree says “it is good as we get to socialise with other people and it also gets us out of the house”.

Maree shares:

I have found it really challenging since Jim has retired.

We are struggling to get to know each other again and finding it hard to spend so much time together.

I am used to being home alone during the day and I feel that he sometimes gets in the way.

Activities don’t need to be expensive

There are many clubs that offer low cost activities. The Mornington Peninsula Community Directory (details on page 8) is a good starting point to find a local group.
Agestrong is a group strengthening and balance program designed for older people. It is run by trained leaders in safe, supportive environments. Agestrong is low cost and is available at 15 venues across the Frankston Mornington Peninsula.

For more information contact the Agestrong Network on 9788 1319 or agestrong@phcn.vic.gov.au or visit www.peninsulahealth.org.au/Agestrong

Peninsula Health presents the Physical Activity Directory for Older People 2011/2012

The directory lists over 200 physical activity groups suitable for older people

Each group listing includes:
- Days & times
- Cost
- Description

Contact Ageing Well for your free copy 9784 8320 www.peninsulahealth.org.au/ageingwell

Agestrong has been developed by the Agestrong Network
Peninsula Health Community Health offers a variety of services for older people including counselling services, exercise programs, community kitchens, Koori programs and much more.

For general enquiries about the range of services and programs available contact your local community health service:

- **Frankston**: 9784 8100
- **Mornington**: 5970 2000
- **Hastings**: 5971 9100
- **Rosebud**: 5986 9250

[www.peninsulahealth.org.au](http://www.peninsulahealth.org.au)

For a free copy of this magazine please contact Ageing Well, Peninsula Health:

- **Phone**: 9784 8320
- **Email**: ageingwell@phcn.vic.gov.au

Or download it from: