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VASCULAR DEMENTIA

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Family carers are the experts, we are not the experts

In the past, a person living with dementia was handed over to the expert staff when they entered residential aged care. The family carer was told to go home and the expert staff would now handle everything. Transition into care has effects on both the person living with dementia and their family. This presentation will share the journey of Noosa Care, when designing their Memory Support Unit and how as part of that design process, the decision was made to make the family carer the focus of the unit. The resident's family carer is considered the expert and has since the introduction of this new model, has taught and mentored staff on how to care for their loved one living with dementia. The physical design of the unit was also an important aspect of the model. The design of the unit promotes self-esteem and autonomy for the person living with dementia. This environment allows resident to walk from one room to another, through the gardens and living areas 24 hours per day. The University of The Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia conducted research on the new model, "To understand the perspectives of older people, their families or carers and staff of the effect of a purpose-built Memory Support Unit on the transition into care". In the findings, family, staff and most importantly the residents living with dementia, expressed an overwhelming positive impact of the built environment and the new model of care.

Biography

Sandra Gilbert has over 25 years of experience as a Registered Nurse and is the Group Care Manager of Noosa Care Australia where she manages over 300 care staff. She is also a Dementia Coach and provides education and consultation to businesses and communities on becoming dementia friendly. She is a Dementia Blogger, Podcaster, and Keynote Speaker and has led many projects designed to provide enabling environments for people living with dementia. She has won numerous awards for her work in the dementia care space.

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