



Centre for
Cultural Diversity
in Ageing

Supported by Benetas

Creating More Trauma-Informed Aged Care Services

November 2025



PICAC
alliance

Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care





OUR VISION

People from CALD backgrounds experience a culturally safe and inclusive aged care system that supports them to live their best life

OUR MISSION

CCDA provides leadership, capacity building and practical guidance to the aged care sector so it can provide culturally safe and inclusive care and services

OUR SERVICE AREAS



Cultural safety and communication training and workshops



Resources to inform practice and assist communication



CALD-Mentoring Program



Information, news and webinars

The Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing is auspiced by Benetas and funded by the Australian Department of Health, Disability and Ageing through the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) program





David Nilsson

Head of Practice – Social Support
Wintringham



Dr David Nilsson is a social worker who has held a number of roles within healthcare management and community-based social care organisations in Melbourne. He was a full-time academic from 2008 to 2025 at six universities within Australia and the UK. In April 2025 he left his role as an Associate Professor of Social Work at Kingston University in London to take up the newly created position of Head of Practice - Social Support at Wintringham where he is focused on the strategic improvement of services for older people experiencing homelessness.



Nicole Sadler

Professor/Director and CEO

Phoenix Australia – Centre for Posttraumatic
Mental Health



Professor Nicole Sadler is a Clinical Psychologist and Chief Executive Officer of Phoenix Australia - Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health. For over three decades Nicole has worked with military members, veterans, emergency services workers, judiciary and frontline health care professionals, who due to the nature of their work, can be impacted by trauma and adversity. She is an expert in trauma-related mental health and wellbeing, suicide and disaster mental health and has led major mental health strategic reviews, research and policy and training development projects for organisations across Australia and internationally.

Trauma-informed Aged Care

Presenters:

Nicole Sadler AM CSC (She/Her) | Professor Director /
Chief Executive Officer **Phoenix Australia** | Centre for
Posttraumatic Mental Health
Department of Psychiatry | The University of Melbourne

David Nilsson - DSW (he / him) *Head of Practice - Social
Support*, Wintringham Aged Care

*[Adjunct Lecturer - School of Allied Health, Health
Sciences & Sport, La Trobe University]*



About Phoenix Australia

- Australia's National Centre of Excellence in Posttraumatic Mental Health
- Affiliated with the University of Melbourne
- Internationally recognised experts in trauma-related mental health and wellbeing.
- Build evidence and translate knowledge into action through policy, training and clinical services
- Improved outcomes for trauma-affected individuals, families and communities.

*We are
Phoenix
Australia.*

*We
understand
trauma and
renew lives.*

The Wintringham story

- Established 1989 by Bryan Lipmann AM
- Social justice not-for-profit organisation
- Over 35 years experience operating in the homelessness and aged care sectors
- Established because of the appalling conditions older people were exposed to in Melbourne's night shelters in the 1980's



Wintringham

Model of Care

- Driven by principles of **social justice and human rights**
- Core organisational values: **Options, Rights and Dignity.**
- **Client-centred**
- **Strengths-based**
- **Empowerment**
- **Trauma informed**



Wintringham

Wintringham Clients

- Over 3000 people supported each day
- Can be reluctant to accept services
- Higher rates of mental health conditions, brain injuries & behaviour support needs
- Experience premature ageing



Wintringham

Service Aims

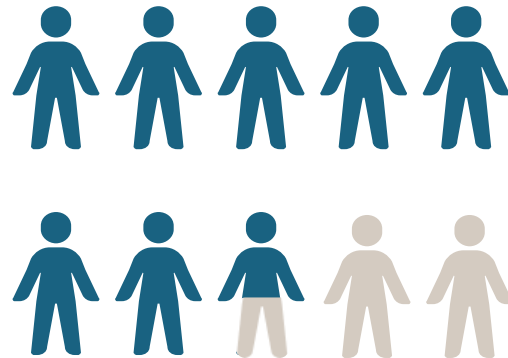
- Enabling our clients to **live a good life**.
- Support to **live well alongside others**, assistance with daily activities, and to bridge **connections** to community, family, and place of origin.
- Wintringham first aged care service with specialisation verification for Care Leavers.



Wintringham

Why is trauma-informed care important?

**75% of Australians will
experience a traumatic event
at some point in their lives.**



Experiences of trauma in older age

- In addition to the impacts of lifetime trauma exposures:
 - Sudden death or serious illness of a partner, other family member, friends
 - Being abused or neglected - as a person becomes more dependent on others, they can be more vulnerable to aggression or abuse, or not having enough food or care:
 - Elder abuse affects 1 in 6 older Australians (NEAPS, 2021).
 - Emotional abuse most common
 - Severe consequences including death, increased hospitalisation rates, earlier entry into aged care
 - Being injured or getting very sick
 - Having a frightening medical procedure
 - Transition into residential care.

Trauma-informed care aims to:

- Minimise trauma related barriers to accessing and engaging with services
- Minimise harms from service delivery
- Increase hope and self-determination
- Support recovery-oriented care – including from impacts of trauma
- Support service provider safety, wellbeing and retention.



TIC principles



Meet Harry

Harry is 79 years old and has recently entered residential aged care.

He was raised by a single mother and lived in government residential care between the ages of 8 to 12 after his mother was imprisoned.

Harry has always lived on the minimum wage and throughout his life he has struggled with symptoms of anxiety and depression.

He was married and he has two daughters, however following a difficult divorce he remains estranged from his ex-wife and daughters.

For the past 10 years he has experienced housing and financial uncertainty.

Staff have noted

- Sensitivity around personal care such as showering
- Anger/short-tempered when being told what to do
- Anger/short-tempered when carers touch his possessions
- Anger/short-tempered when carers enter his room without knocking first and waiting
- General unwillingness to fit in with the facility routines (e.g. lining up for meals in dining room)

Principle 4

Build connections, promote quality of life



'Tempest' by Jill 2025



'A Study in Anger' by Jill 2025

Principle 4

Build connections, promote quality of life



**'Superman Hesitates over
Shoalhaven River'**
- Ian, 2025



**'On a Farm with the Trees
and the Birds, by a River '**
- Aunty Jane, 2025

Staff Training and resources

- Videos, handouts, organisational assessment tools and manuals:
<https://phoenixaustralia.org/aged-care/>
- Self-paced training for workers and managers:
<https://education.phoenixaustralia.org/catalog?pagename=Trauma-informed-training-for-aged-care-professionals>
- <https://www.dementia.com.au/>





Connect with the Centre

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