



## **Supporting Storytelling and Reminiscence in Culturally Responsive Aged Care**

### **Why it Matters**

Every older person has a unique life story shaped by family, culture, language, migration, work, community and significant life experiences. Taking time to understand these experiences can strengthen trust, support identity and help staff provide more meaningful, person-centred care. For CALD older people, storytelling and reminiscence may also help maintain connection with cultural identity, preferred language, family traditions and places or communities that remain important to them.

### **What is Reminiscence?**

Reminiscence involves supporting a person to recall and share meaningful memories and experiences. This may occur through:

- Conversation and storytelling
- Photographs and family albums
- Familiar music or songs
- Cultural objects and clothing
- Food, recipes and aromas
- Religious or spiritual items
- Familiar activities, celebrations and routines

### **Supporting CALD Older People**

- Ask about the person's country, region or community of origin without assuming it defines their whole identity.
- Explore which language they prefer when discussing personal memories.
- Use bilingual staff, interpreters or family support where appropriate and preferred.
- Include culturally familiar music, food, photographs, objects and celebrations.
- Ask about migration experiences, important places and connections to family overseas.
- Explore past roles, occupations, responsibilities and achievements.
- Recognise that family and community stories may be as important as individual experiences.
- Include cultural and life-history information in care planning where relevant
- Respect that some memories may involve grief, trauma, conflict or displacement

### **Best practice**

- Ask open questions about family, culture and life experiences.
- Use familiar music, photos, food or meaningful objects as prompts.
- Let the person guide the conversation at their own pace.
- Respect topics they prefer not to discuss or find distressing.
- Use what you learn to personalise care and activities.

### **Practice Tip**

Storytelling should never feel like an interview. The goal is connection, not collecting information. A familiar story, song, object or routine can help a person feel recognised, valued and connected.

Learn More: [Micro-learning sessions by MAC](#)

