

This leaflet is part of a series written by nurses, doctors and experts with experience in aged care. The series aims to make your journey into residential aged care easier. Look for other leaflets on questions to ask about specific care needs. These can be downloaded at:

www.10questions.org.au

You may find these leaflets useful when:

- Searching for a high quality residential aged care facility
- Reviewing the quality of your current residential aged care facility
- Deciding between two residential aged care facilities that appear similar.

It's important there are enough registered nurses within the staff skill mix to meet everyone's needs. You should ask questions about how your individual care needs will be met.

Many staff wear similar uniforms. Just because someone looks like a nurse does not mean they are. Here are the differences:

A **Registered Nurse (RN)** has undertaken a minimum three-year Bachelor of Nursing course. They can undertake nursing procedures, manage pain medication and help prevent unnecessary hospital admissions.

An **Enrolled Nurse (EN)** works under the direction of an RN. Both are registered by a regulatory body. Registration ensures professional standards are maintained and protects the public.

Assistants in Nursing (AIN)/Care Workers/ Care Service Employees (CSE) are unlicensed. They provide most of the care in residential facilities and community but their level of training is variable.

IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO ASK

The best way to find a residential aged care facility that suits you is to visit a few. To find your local ones, or for more information about aged care services contact: **My Aged Care**
 ☎ **1800 200 422** myagedcare.gov.au

If you require advocacy or specialist advice about any matter not covered in this leaflet:

Seniors Rights Service ☎ **1800 424 079**
www.dva.gov.au
 ☎ **1800 VETERAN**
 (1800 838 372)

OPEN ARMS www.openarms.gov.au
 Veterans & Families Counselling ☎ **1800 011 046**

This leaflet has been developed and endorsed by:



For a full list of supporting organisations please visit www.10questions.org.au

If you have concerns about a residential aged care facility contact:

☎ 1800 951 822

 **Australian Government**
 Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

www.agedcarequality.gov.au

10 Questions to Ask

ABOUT VETERAN NEEDS IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE

www.10questions.org.au

1 **Are there social activities that connect me to the ex-service community?**

Check how many veterans currently live there and how staff encourage veterans to come together socially, including visits from the ex-service community. Ask if commemorative events such as ANZAC Day are honoured and you can attend external events. If a Veteran Welfare Officer or volunteers can't provide transport, check if staff can accompany you, and if you pay extra for this.

2 **How many staff or volunteers are veterans or members of the veteran community?**

Ideally veterans and/or members from the veteran community relevant to your individual circumstances should be employed, and/or volunteers or ex-service organisations connected to the home. Check there's someone who can support you to maintain your individual veteran identity.

3 **Can I bring my customised rehabilitation appliance or aid I have acquired through DVA's Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP)?**

You may already have aids and equipment provided to you under the RAP. If so, you may be able to bring these items with you when you move in. It's worth checking beforehand which items you can bring as some may already be provided.

4 **How will you support my veteran identity?**

Look around to see if there's military memorabilia and artefacts on display and ask if you can bring items from your own home to personalise your room. If you don't feel safe to display photos and medals in your room,

consider showing replicas instead. Make sure your military service is included in your care plan so staff know your individual history.

5 **How will you support my veteran identity at end of life?**

Staff should ensure any military background and preferences you wish to share are considered at end of life and recorded in an Advance Care Directive*. Staff turnover can be high so make sure this document is well known to all those caring for you.

6 **How will you support me to claim all my financial entitlements?**

Check staff know about the veteran supplement and how this can be used to support your mental and physical health needs. Some services may be exempt from your entitlements and its important staff know what you can and cannot claim to avoid having to pay unexpected charges.

7 **How will I know what out-of-pocket expenses I'll have to pay?**

Staff and management should explain to you any additional expenses, as you may still need to pay for some services or extras. It's best to understand what these are before you move in and they should be clearly stated in your aged care contract. For information on extra charges, contracts and fees, refer to other leaflets in this series.

8 **How will you maintain my preferences and dignity?**

You have the right to make choices about how you spend your time, how you want your care to be delivered, and by whom. Your care should not be determined by the routine of the home or staffing shortfalls. Make sure your preferences are written into your care plan and Advance Care Directive. You should be given a copy of the Charter of Aged Care Rights to keep.

9 **Are the visiting GPs experienced with Department for Veterans' Affairs (DVA) clients?**

Check if your own doctor can continue to look after you. GPs should preferably have some experience of or sensitivity to the mental and physical health needs of veterans, especially if they visit the home regularly. Check they are familiar with additional services offered by DVA so they can refer you to the full range of appropriate services such as allied health services.

10 **How do you support veterans' mental health?**

Staff should be trained to recognise PTSD and provide trauma informed care. Staff turnover can be high so check all staff receive training when first employed, and regularly updated. Check what counselling and mental health care is provided at the home. Also, if staff know how to refer carers and family members of veterans to counselling services, including Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling, if needed.

*An Advance Care Directive outlines your preferences for your future care along with your beliefs, values and goals. You can also formally appoint a family member or nominated person for when you can no longer make decisions yourself. Advance Care Directives differ between states and territories. Learn more about directives in your state or territory: www.advancereplanning.org.au