



## Community Café:

*Building caring communities for people with dementia.*

Getting a diagnosis of dementia can be a lonely journey for the person and their family, and for a number of reasons, their community and support network can get smaller as the disease progresses.

Community Café Health & Wellness was started in Canberra in 2019 to address social isolation in dementia, as we knew they were having a positive impact on people with the disease nationally and worldwide.

We hope to create a peer support network, and caring community around the individual with dementia and their families, supporting each other throughout the journey and reducing the stigma of the disease.

*"We know that dementia is viewed as an illness, but why can't we focus on dementia wellness?"*

How often do we take for granted, the simple act of catching up for coffee with friends or family? Research is now showing the huge negative impacts that social isolation has on people's quality of life including mortality.

Our monthly Community Café at Burrungiri Rivett, combines local pre-schoolers and different generations in a safe, welcoming and social setting, bringing the community together to engage in meaningful activities. This is then followed by yoga, breathing techniques and mindfulness. There is also cake – lots of cake.

Our second café is held at a bookstore/wine bar and is suited for early or newly diagnosed people with dementia. This is held at Beyond Q Bookstore Weston.

Our aim is to offer a space where we can all come together as one big community. To celebrate people who live with dementia and support their personhood.

Dementia is just one small aspect of what makes a person who they are. So often we get caught up in the disease, that we forget that they are people - people like you and me.

*"We lament the millions of neurons lost to dementia and ignore the many millions that work perfectly well"*  
*Power, 2012.*



The Community Café also offers people living with a diagnosis of dementia and their loved one's access to the latest information on dementia wellness, from a variety of health professionals and industry thought leaders, in an easy to read a blog.

Being a self-funded enterprise, we curated an online store with carefully selected wellness products to support our little venture, items are evidence-based and explained in full. 100 percent of the profits go towards the running of this social initiative.

*"We have a clear vision of what the future of dementia care looks like, and we are all in"*

We want to partner with local businesses, policymakers, aged care facilities, government and not for profits to pave a new way forward. We educate aged care facilities around Australia, empowering aged care staff to see person centred care and dementia care as one

We know that change is possible, and that person-centred care, personhood and relational care are more than just buzz words. Culture change is needed now.

*"People with dementia require more than "person-centred care": they need to know they live in a social world in which they will be held in connection because that's what being is."  
Macdonald & Mears, 2019.*

There is a lack of research in this area and we hope to contribute to this in 2020, highlighting the benefits of such cafes, whilst educating and empowering others to deliver care that is person-centred and heart led.

For more information on our Community Café or to be part of one of our groups – Contact Nicole **0425 619 162** or head over to our website, <https://communitycafe.com.au>

