

Respect My Wishes

Many older people have lived through experiences where they:

- Had no choice or control
- Were touched without consent
- Were not believed or listened to
- Felt unsafe, powerless, or humiliated

Trauma informed care for Older Adults

What this means for care

Some older adults find personal or medical care difficult- becoming fearful, withdrawn, upset or resistant.

Instead of asking *“Why are they resisting?”*

Trauma-informed care encourages us to ask:

- *“What might this be bringing up for them?”*
- *“How can I help them feel safer and more in control?”*

Small changes — explaining, asking permission, slowing down, offering choice — can significantly reduce distress and help older adults feel respected and safe.

Trauma-informed language you can use

- “Is there anything about this care that might feel uncomfortable for you?”
- “What would help you feel more at ease right now?”
- “Would you like me to explain each step or check in as we go?”
- “You can let me know if you want to pause or stop.”

Respect My Wishes checklist

The tool on the following page can be used as a checklist prompt when providing care, or can be used by older adults as a self-advocacy tool prior to receiving care.

Respect My Wishes

What helps me feel safer and more comfortable during health care

Please consider the following when providing my care:

- ☐ Introduce yourself and explain your role
- ☐ Take time to get to know a bit about me before starting
- ☐ Explain what you are going to do and why, before you do it
- ☐ Ask me: “*What could make this easier for you?*”
- ☐ Ask my permission before touching me
- ☐ Let me know that it is okay to stop or pause at any time
- ☐ Agree with me on a clear “pause” or “stop” signal
- ☐ Check if I have any questions
- ☐ Maximise my privacy (for example, keep doors or curtains closed, cover me appropriately during care)
- ☐ Check in with me regularly to see if I am okay
- ☐ Gently remind me to breathe slowly and deeply if needed
- ☐ Watch for non-verbal cues and pause if I seem uncomfortable
- ☐ Only restart when I say I am ready

Other important things to know about me:
