Together for Social and Emotional Wellbeing
Your introduction to Aftercare
Social and emotional wellbeing means different things to different people. It’s a personal journey throughout various stages of life. Your wellbeing is unique to you.

Your journey can include your family, friends and your community, or it may be something that is private to you.

More than 100 years of wellbeing

You may have already been through a difficult time and right now, you may want support. We are here to support you.

Aftercare can help you to identify what’s important to you. We work together with you to achieve your goals.
About Aftercare

Aftercare was founded in 1907 by Emily Paterson.

Emily grew up on the family property, Rockend, opposite the Gladesville Mental Hospital and would visit female patients, often inviting them to her home for afternoon tea. She formed strong relationships with these women and became concerned that when they left the hospital, they would have nowhere to live, no money and be without friends — a very frightening prospect for someone who has just recovered from mental illness. So with the support of medical, political and intellectual figures of the day, Emily proposed the formation of Aftercare.

Supporting social and emotional wellbeing today

Aftercare continues to deliver Emily’s founding vision through the provision of mental health and disability support (social and emotional wellbeing) services. We’re the longest-serving organisation in Australia delivering this care.

We can work with you should you want assistance or if you care for someone with a mental illness or intellectual disability.

We offer services in over 40 locations across Australia and we’re committed to continuously evolving to meet the needs of all Australians.

At any given time thousands of people aged from 12 to 80 years are being supported through our different services which are based on our values of respect, integrity, leadership, professionalism, fairness and advocating a better understanding in the community of social and emotional wellbeing.

We focus on youth, Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, based on our dedication to improve access for socially disadvantaged groups. We are flexible when we work with you, ensuring that your cultural needs are respected by the support we provide.
Every story is unique...

For more than 100 years, Aftercare has been privileged to support people with their wellbeing.

Over time, one common thread has emerged — that every person’s story is unique.

Here we share some of those stories with you...

Michael

Michael came to us with depression and anxiety. He hadn’t worked for some time and his condition had affected all aspects of his life. Having completed the Eliciting Values exercise, Michael identified 3 main goals — he wanted to have his condition managed, he wanted to find work again, and he wanted to build a boat so that he could sail around the Eastern Seaboard of Australia. Each goal seemed unreachable. We worked with Michael to help him believe it was possible. A month short of his 12 month participation with us, Michael said goodbye. He was managing his condition through medication and counselling. He found work in the first six months and was soon promoted to a supervisory role. Best of all, he proclaimed that his boat was more than half-built and he would be in the water, sailing before the end of the year!

—Aftercare Team Leader

Peter

Peter, an Aboriginal person, was in gaol 10 years ago. He had some literacy, was dependant on alcohol, was previously addicted to heroin and had a diagnosis of schizophrenia. However, the gentleman has had a significant turnaround. We quickly formed a bond, but really, the change came from Peter. He wanted to do well for his parents — his main care givers, and his family — the most important thing in his life and his strongest motivators. He was able to get fitted for special dyslexia tinted lenses and together we attended TAFE to get him enrolled in adult education. He has been drug free for the last few years, he is cutting back on alcohol and tobacco and is seeing his doctor regularly. The knowledge of his mental illness and current situation has changed.

— Aftercare support worker
Eliza

I was falling apart and finding it hard to make it through each day. I found it hard to get onto the correct medication to help alleviate the rage, mood swings and the feeling of being completely unmotivated. The experience of pregnancy, childbirth and parenting were so traumatic and overwhelming that I could not cope. For the sake of my daughter and myself, I voluntarily placed her in foster care. I still feel extremely guilty and heartbroken every day. A few days after signing my daughter over, I was granted a place with Aftercare.

The time I spent there was supportive and productive. It felt good to be involved with other people who had survived abuse and I was surrounded by people who genuinely cared. I felt like I fitted in. I enjoyed the activities and the outings we shared, like planting a garden, watching it grow and using our own harvest in the meals we made together. They were welcome distractions and uplifting experiences. However, I had to deal with my demons — the bad dreams and the horrible memories.

I had to give up drugs and alcohol as part of the program. It was hard and once again, things got too overwhelming and painful to face. I made the decision to leave the house, against the advice of the support workers — I left to go and hide in my own little space. Thankfully though, through the outreach support workers, I am still able to receive the help I need to get to my child visits and doctors’ appointments. I am comforted knowing that someone is checking in on me, thinking of me.

Nathan

I spent time on the streets after the death of my father and trouble with my step father, and I was finding it really hard to deal with my anxiety and stress. I was lucky to be put into contact with Aftercare — they helped me get my life back on track. The support that the outreach worker provided me has allowed me to grow and develop into a happier young man and helped me to find ways of dealing with my stress. Aftercare has linked me with services that have assisted me to get long term accommodation and they have helped me get the right payments from Centrelink. They have also supported me in attending employment courses, which have given me a better opportunity when applying for jobs. I was involved with Aftercare for over two months and I know that if I need to re-engage with the service, I can do so at any time. This has given me peace of mind, knowing that a service is out there to support me when I need it.

For more stories visit www.aftercare.com.au.

* Note: real names have been changed to protect privacy
How we can work together

Aftercare’s services build on people’s ability.

This may be through strengthening family and friendship networks, helping to create new ways to enjoy social and recreational activities or by providing support for educational and work experiences.

Aftercare can work with you to identify your goals and we offer support in a variety of ways. We can provide assistance with developing the skills to manage day-to-day tasks, through to fully-supported accommodation services.

We work with you through:

• **Community connection** services where we support you to reconnect with your chosen community through community-based activities.

• **Housing and accommodation** services which provide you with both short and long-term accommodation and support.

• **Independent living** programs to assist you to have an independent lifestyle through outreach support, skills training and mentoring.

• **Personal helpers and mentors** programs where we work with you in recovery to set and achieve your individual goals based on your strengths and values.

• **Family and carer support** services and education to support the vital part you play in the care and recovery of your loved one.

• **Intellectual disability** community-based support to assist you to live independently in your chosen community.

• **Youth support** to assist you through services such as headspace and Time Out, because we recognise that as a young person you may face particular issues or concerns.

For more information about our specific services and programs visit www.aftercare.com.au.
Developing your goals

1. Setting your goals

If Aftercare can help you meet your goals and you're happy to go ahead, we’ll sit down with you (and others, if you wish) to create a plan you agree with. This plan outlines how we’ll work together to help you achieve your goals. A copy will be given to you.

During this process, we may ask if we can speak with other professionals involved in your support (e.g. your doctor or community health professional). This is all done with your consent and the information is confidential.

2. Providing you with support

Services are usually provided during office hours, Monday to Friday. In some residential services, Aftercare provides 24 hour support. If your regular service falls on a public holiday, it may have to be rescheduled.

We may provide care for other people living in the same house (e.g. children or partners) if they are eligible to receive our services. We can also assist you with shopping or appointments in your area.

We want to provide a good service, but sometimes it may not always be possible to have the same worker. We may need to change your support worker. If your support worker is on leave, we’ll arrange for someone else to take their place and we’ll give you as much notice as possible.

Reviewing your support

Each year, we review your support to see how everything is going. You can ask for a review at any time and your support may be altered if your goals change. We’ll discuss any changes with you (and if you wish, your family, doctor or other services involved). You may also choose to have a family member or advocate present when your support is reviewed.

Stopping a service

If you need to stop a service at any time, please try to give notice so your support worker can do other things.
The next step

Goals can help you change the direction of your life.

The first step is finding out what’s important to you. Throughout life, the things we value change, but creating meaningful goals will help you to achieve what you really want.

Aftercare support workers can help you to help set goals based on what you really want to do. Why not talk about your plans to help get you closer to where you want to be? Your Aftercare worker can talk to you about your plans so that you can identify the goals that you believe you can achieve. Things can be different and better!

Imagine doing more of the things you want to do. Goals should be specific so they can be achieved, but allow yourself to dream of how things might be when you are goal setting. You don’t need to set a lot of goals, but keep in mind that changing things around to make a better life can be fun!

Once you’ve decided what you want to do, the next step is to work out how to do it. Aftercare support workers have been trained to work with you to plan specific actions that will help you to achieve your goals and will give you support and encouragement on the way. After time, you may wish to review or change your goals, or you might want to know how far you’ve come? Aftercare can be there at each step of your journey if you want.

Enjoy your journey. We hope we can work with you to make it easier, more enjoyable and more successful.
What you can expect

You have the right

To be treated with respect  •  Get information about recovery and wellbeing  •  Make informed choices about your life  •  Be valued and recognised as an individual  •  Have the same opportunities as anyone to live, work and participate in community life (and have support to access these opportunities)  •  Participate fully in your goal setting and action planning with your support worker  •  Access an advocate, or someone that you trust to speak on your behalf  •  Quality services that have enough resources  •  Services that work with other agencies, so you don’t have to keep repeating your story  •  Services that are right for you, your age, gender and cultural influences  •  Services that are safe for all involved  •  Privacy and confidentially of personal information and access to view and correct this information to the extent that it does not pose a serious risk to yourself or anyone else  •  Provide feedback (including making a complaint) about the service you receive and any changes to your program or service  •  Be made aware of your rights and responsibilities by Aftercare  •  Expect that Aftercare staff members are aware of and will uphold your rights and responsibilities

You have the responsibility

To behave in a way that respects and ensures the safety of Aftercare support workers and members of the community  •  Cooperate in making your home a safe working environment  •  Participate by working on goal setting and action planning with your support worker  •  Let your support worker know as soon as possible if you need to change any part of your program, such as meeting times  •  Talk with your support worker about what is working and what is not working in your program or service  •  Let your support worker know about your cultural needs  •  Communicate with your support worker about your preferences in relation to including your family and friends in decision-making about your program or service

Questions

What is an advocate?
An advocate is someone who you can nominate to act on your behalf to assist you with decision-making and negotiation. This person may be a family member, a trusted friend or someone who is formally appointed (e.g. a guardian or legal representative). You can have your advocate present during service assessments and reviews and your advocate can be included in any communication between you and Aftercare.

If you would like assistance in arranging advocacy, speak to your support worker for further information. You can also contact Commonwealth Carelink on 1800 052 222.

You have the right to ask for an advocate and the right to change your advocate at any time.

How can I access an interpreter?
If you would like the assistance of an interpreter service you can call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 at any time.

Your support worker can also assist in arranging an interpreter for you.

What other support is available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders?
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders can contact the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Contact Line on 1800 019 123 to access assistance with legal matters or for victim services and support.

Do I need to pay for support services?
Aftercare doesn’t generally charge for support services. However, if a charge is required for your service, this will be arranged between you and an Aftercare’s worker. Fees can be paid by direct debit from your bank account or through Centrelink, if you are on a Government benefit.

What if I need financial help?
If you would like any information about your ongoing fees, or if you’re having difficulty making payment, speak to your support worker who can assist you with making appropriate arrangements.

Can I change my service?
You can ask to change your services if you are going to be away from home (e.g. if you’re on holidays or in hospital). Please contact your support worker as soon as possible to tell them about any changes, so that your services can start again when you return.

What happens if I leave an Aftercare service?
Aftercare aims to provide flexible services that adapt as your goals change, but there may be times when our services are no longer suitable — you may have achieved the goals in your plan or things may change and the services may no longer help you. If this happens, we can get other support for you.

We’ll always talk to you (and your family, advocate or other services, if you wish) about any changes. Where possible, we’ll continue to assist you until other support is organised.

If you feel you no longer require your service, you can stop at any time by giving two weeks’ notice. Stopping a service won’t stop you from getting another Aftercare service in the future.

Do you have another question? Contact Aftercare by email at generalenquiry@aftercare.com.au or call 02 8572 7700.
You and Aftercare

Workplace health and safety

Aftercare has a duty of care to ensure the health, safety and welfare of people in the workplace under Commonwealth and State law. This responsibility extends to everyone who is involved in or is affected by our work (including staff, volunteers, clients, contractors and visitors). This means that if you receive a service in your own home (because it’s a working environment for Aftercare staff) we require your cooperation to ensure appropriate safety.

Your privacy and confidentiality

You have the right to privacy and confidentiality at all times and all of Aftercare’s services are bound by Privacy Acts which regulate the way your personal information is collected, used, secured and disclosed.

Aftercare has a Privacy Policy Statement (available from your support worker) which outlines how we protect your information. You can be sure all of your personal information, service records, progress notes and all correspondence about you, your family and/or carer are kept confidential. For more information about your privacy and confidentiality visit www.aftercare.com.au or talk to your support worker or service coordinator. Alternatively, you may wish to contact the Office of the Privacy Commissioner on 1300 363 992 or visit their website at www.privacy.gov.au.

Your feedback — improving our service

To ensure we offer you the best quality service, Aftercare provides an avenue for feedback — we want to know if you have found our service helpful, if you have ideas on how something can be done better, or if you would like to make a complaint. We value what you think and we strive to manage all feedback fairly and effectively.

To provide feedback at any time, speak to your service coordinator or support worker. You may also email feedback@aftercare.com.au, write to PO Box 82, Rozelle NSW 2039 or call 02 8572 7700. Alternatively, complete and return the attached Feedback Form (this form is available from all services and online at www.aftercare.com.au).

Making a complaint

We encourage you to advise us as soon as possible if you have any concerns, or aren’t happy with any part of your service, so that we can act to fix the problem. Your service won’t be affected in any way if you make a complaint.

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing to an Aftercare staff member, support worker, service coordinator, the Executive Director, Human Resources Manager, or by completing and returning the attached Feedback Form.

To make a complaint email feedback@aftercare.com.au. You may also write to us at PO Box 82, Rozelle NSW 2039 or call us on 02 8572 7700.

Aftercare is committed to investigating and resolving all complaints. We aim to deal with all complaints seriously, quickly and confidentially.

If you wish to speak to a free, independent agency, you can contact the Health Care Complaints Commission on 1800 043 159 (in NSW), the Health Quality and Complaints Commission on 07 3120 5999 or 1800 077 308 (in QLD) or the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office on 08 6551 7600 or 1800 813 583 (in WA). You can also call the Disability Complaints Service on 1800 422 015 or the Intellectual Disability Rights Services (IDRS) on 02 9318 0144.
Feedback form

Your details

Name ....................................................................................................................................................................

Telephone number ...........................................................................................................................................

Email address ...................................................................................................................................................

Address ............................................................................................................................................................

Aftercare program / service ..............................................................................................................................

Support person

Are you assisting someone to complete this form?
If you are providing feedback on behalf of someone who is a participant with Aftercare, please also provide your details:

Name ....................................................................................................................................................................

Relationship to participant ..................................................................................................................................

Telephone number .............................................................................................................................................

Email address ....................................................................................................................................................

Type of feedback

☐ I would like to thank someone for their great service
☐ I would like to make a suggestion
☐ I am unable to access a service
☐ I am unhappy with the service I have been given
☐ I have been discriminated against or sexually harassed
☐ I am unable to access my money
☐ Other (please indicate)

At Aftercare we aim to provide you with the best quality service, so we welcome your feedback.

If you have any suggestions, ideas, or if you are not happy with any aspect of our service, please complete this form.

If you need help completing the form, or require urgent assistance, please call 02 8572 7700.

Once completed, please return this form by post to PO Box 82, Rozelle NSW 2039 or by email to feedback@aftercare.com.au.

* please turn over and complete the next page
Suggestion/complaint details

Please provide details about your suggestion or complaint (including the date, information about the event, staff or other participant, if relevant). If you need more room, please attach another page. If you have any supporting information, please also attach this. If you are raising a concern or making a complaint, you may wish to let us know what support you have received so far, how you have been affected and what outcome you would like.

Description ........................................................................................................................................................................
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Additional comments ................................................................................................................................................................
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Signature ........................................................................................................................................................................

Date ........................................................................................................................................................................
Your notes