**SANE’s *Ageing Well* Guide Communications Kit**

**Suggested content – 100 words**

Whether you’re over 65, approaching the later years, or supporting a family member, friend or client living with mental illness, planning ahead is important for all of us.

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Planning ahead is about preparing for issues related to living arrangements; physical and mental healthcare; and legal, financial and lifestyle matters. And it starts with a conversation.

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SANE’s new resource the *Ageing Well* guide has been developed to make the process of thinking ahead easier, with a checklist to help develop a plan.

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The *Ageing Well* guide is available for download from www.sane.org. Alternatively, contact SANE Australia on (03) 9682 5933 to order the guide.

Links:

<https://www.sane.org/sane-guide-to-ageing-well>

<https://www.sane.org/projects/aged-care>

**Suggested content – 200 words**

Whether you’re over 65, approaching the later years, or supporting a family member, friend or client living with mental illness, planning ahead is important for all of us.

Planning ahead is about preparing for issues related to living arrangements, physical and mental healthcare, financial and lifestyle matters. And it starts with a conversation.

Even though planning ahead is important to maintain wellbeing, SANE Australia’s research found that the majority of people living with mental illness, and their carers, are not planning for the future[[1]](#footnote-1).

Discussions about a person’s wishes and needs as they age can be difﬁcult, but are crucial to ensure choice, comfort and quality of care.

SANE’s new resource the *Ageing Well* guide has been developed to make the process of planning easier, with a checklist to help people develop a plan.

SANE’s *Ageing Well* guide is available for download from www.sane.org. Alternatively, you can contact SANE Australia on (03) 9682 5933 to order the guide.

Links:

<https://www.sane.org/sane-guide-to-ageing-well>

<https://www.sane.org/projects/aged-care>

<http://www.sane.org/growing-older-staying-well>

**Suggested content: Social media**

**Twitter**

* Planning ahead is vital given the impact of ageing on #mentalhealth. Use SANEs Ageing Well & think of the future <http://ow.ly/NQKYL>
* R u 65+ or support someone w #mentalillness? Planning is critical. Use SANEs Ageing Well to think of the future <http://ow.ly/NQKYL>
* Most ppl living w #mentalillness & their carers aren't thinking of the future. Use SANEs Ageing Well to plan ahead <http://ow.ly/NQKYL>
* 'How do I make #mentalhealth decisions for my dad?' Sabrina blogs on the importance of #mentalillness & planning http://ow.ly/NQLqA
* 'Why didn’t we talk about it & discuss dads wishes?' #SANEblog on planning ahead when ppl w #mentalillness age <http://ow.ly/NQLqA>

**Facebook #1**

Whether you’re over 65, or supporting a someone living with mental illness, planning ahead is important for all of us.

But research by SANE Australia has found the majority of people living with mental illness, and their carers, are not doing this!

SANE’s new resource the Ageing Well guide has been developed to make the process of planning ahead easier - with a checklist to help people develop a plan.

Endorsed by the peak body for older Australians, COTA, use the SANE's Ageing Well guide to initiate a conversation and start planning for the future.

Visit: <https://www.sane.org/sane-guide-to-ageing-well>

**Facebook #2**

'Why didn’t we talk about it? Why didn’t we sit down as a family and discuss dad’s wishes for the future?'

Sabrina blogs on the importance of planning ahead when people with mental illness enter older age.

Have you and your family discussed the future?

Read it here: <https://www.sane.org/sane-media/the-sane-blog/1435-if-you-are-reaching-the-later-years-or-support-someone-who-is-this-is-for-you>

**Suggested content: Opinion piece**

**If you are reaching the later years, or support someone who is, this is for you**

By: Sabrina Nemorin, Aged Care Project Officer

In 2010 I found myself in a hospital waiting room signing off on a medical procedure that would change my dad’s life forever. He had been sick for years, but never, in all the conversations we’d had, did we speak about the future—what I should do if I ever had to make decisions on his behalf.

That was nearly five years ago now, and my dad is no longer with us. When he died last year, we weren’t prepared, even though he had been unwell for some time. The questions still remain. Why didn’t we talk about it? Why didn’t we sit down as a family and discuss my dad’s wishes for the future?

My personal experiences have helped me develop SANE’s *Ageing Well* guide. Endorsed by the peak body for older Australians, COTA, the guide will help people - just like my family - have the conversation we never had and start planning for the future.

Planning ahead isn’t all about illness; it can include issues related to living arrangements, physical and mental health care, legal, financial and lifestyle matters. Making a plan can protect your assets and income or simply ensure you can continue to age well and be active.

Planning for the future is important for all of us, but it’s especially important if you live with a health condition - whether mental, physical, or both. I encourage you to use SANE’s resources to help you make your plans, and the tips below are a great start.

Five tips to help you plan ahead:

1 - If you or the person you support lives with a health condition, learn as much as you can about it. For information, advice and referral contact the **SANE Helpline**, 1800 18 7263.

2 - Make time to consider the options. We all get caught up in everyday life, but it is important to make time to think about your wishes for the future.

3 - Try to be informed about the services available. Contact the **My Aged Care** service for more information, www.myagedcare.gov.au or 1800 200 422.

4 - Download SANE’s *Ageing Well* guide to help you develop your plan. The guide includes a checklist so you can work through a plan at your own pace.

5 - Try to remember that as hard as these conversations can be, it is much harder to manage difficult situations that have not been prepared for.

Links:

<https://www.sane.org/sane-media/the-sane-blog/1435-if-you-are-reaching-the-later-years-or-support-someone-who-is-this-is-for-you>

<https://www.sane.org/sane-guide-to-ageing-well>

<https://www.sane.org/projects/aged-care>

**Suggested content: Media release**

**Healthy ageing at risk without a plan**

Planning ahead is essential but not common for many older Australians living with a mental illness, according to research by the national mental health charity SANE Australia.

‘Many people manage their mental illness over a number of years and they’re often pretty resilient; but as they get older, additional challenges impact on their lives,’ says Jack Heath, CEO of SANE Australia.

‘We’ve spoken with older people living with mental illness and while their experiences vary widely, declining physical health, an uncertain housing future and isolation are common concerns. All these factors can complicate mental health issues and prevent a person from ageing well,’ Heath explains.

‘Two in every three people we talked to haven’t discussed a plan for the future.’

Suitable housing is a real issue for some people, especially those financially disadvantaged. People living with a mental illness find it harder than the rest of the community to find and keep their own home. As they age, they often find themselves in less than ideal circumstances.

For many of the 40 years Graeme has lived with Schizophrenia, he rented a house with the support of mental health services. But when the Melbourne artist’s circumstances changed, the 68 year old found himself in a residential aged care facility.

‘I didn’t realise I had options,’ he explains. ‘I was unwell at the time, and I needed the extra supports, but I’m well now and it would be nice to have my own place again where I can paint and do my work,’ says Graeme. ‘I still need help around the house but I didn’t know there are services that can give me that support.’

Research shows home-based community supports together with mental health treatment for older people can reduce the likelihood of early admission to residential care, as well as improve quality of life and reduce healthcare costs. ‘People need to know these services exist,’ Heath says.

‘We need to get the message out especially because we know our population is ageing. By 2040,

1 in 5 people will be over 65,’ Heath adds. ‘As the population continues to age, the number of older Australians living with mental illness will increase.’

According to Dr Rod McKay, Director of Psychiatry and Mental Health Programs at the NSW Institute of Psychiatry, it is important to ensure older people feel they are in control of their lives.

‘Too often older people, particularly those with a mental illness, feel decisions are taken out of their hands, contributing to a sense of hopelessness and despair,’ explains the lead author of a recent report on psychiatry services for older people prepared by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

‘The process of planning ahead can be confronting,’ says Heath. ‘We’re talking about issues relating to legal and financial affairs and medical or mental health care. These are difficult conversations to have, but without them, we reduce the likelihood that we will be in control of these decisions later on. Planning ahead is crucial to ensure choice, comfort and quality of care.’

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‘As a result of our research, SANE Australia has developed *Ageing Well: A guide to planning ahead for older people who live with mental illness, their family and friends.* We hope it will make this process easier,’ explains Heath.

The plain language guide looks at home and social supports, health, legal, and financial issues and includes a checklist to help work through the planning process.

‘Planning ahead can involve difficult conversations and choices. This guide is a helpful tool to start those conversations and prepare for the future,’ says Ian Yates, the Chief Executive of COTA for older Australians.

‘Good mental health is intrinsic to healthy ageing. Planning ahead and being prepared is a really important part of maintaining good mental health as we age,’ Heath adds.

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Download SANE’s *Ageing Well: A Planning Guide* [*https://www.sane.org/sane-guide-to-ageing-well*](https://www.sane.org/sane-guide-to-ageing-well)

Or *Growing Older, staying well: Mental health care for older Australians* <https://www.sane.org/growing-older-staying-well>

1. *Growing Older Staying Well: Mental health care for older Australians*

   *http://www.sane.org/growing-older-staying-well* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)