**SANE’s *Ageing Well* guide**

**Suggested content: Opinion piece**

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

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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>