



What is the Healthy Eating Active Living Matters (HEALing Matters) program?

HEALing Matters is a Victorian Government funded online training package and knowledge exchange platform for out of home care (OOHC) residential workers and carers. Developed by health and psychology researchers at the Monash Centre for Health Research and Implementation, the program is based on extensive end-user, community service organisations and stakeholder engagement. The primary aim of HEALing Matters is to improve on not only the eating and physical activity habits but also the wellbeing and life skills of young people living in residential care.

The HEALing Matters program uses a trauma informed philosophy to residential workers' and carers' understanding of the link between healthy lifestyle behaviours of the young people you care for and improved physical, cognitive, social (interpersonal) and emotional outcomes. In doing so, HEALing Matters moves beyond a solely behavioural approach to health and wellbeing and recognises that food and physical activity can be powerful ways of demonstrating trust, predictability and the provision of support and care that is attuned to the needs of the young people. It is through this approach that HEALing Matters is seen as foundational in helping young people develop the necessary life skills required before leaving care.

The HEALing Matters program provides residential workers and carers with a valuable professional development opportunity designed to help them not only improve the eating and physical activity habits of the young people they care for but also with other important factors that form part of the day-to-day roles and responsibilities of residential workers and carers. These include how to respond to pain-based behaviour, develop and maintain strong relationships, create a consistent and productive house environment through shaping routines, and how to avoid burnout by taking care of oneself in what can be a very stressful work environment.

In addition, HEALing Matters includes a wide range of easy-to-use and practical resources, including recipes, shopping tricks and tips, where to find local sporting opportunities, how to encourage incidental exercise, and much more!

Importantly, HEALing Matters and the information and tools provided as part of the online training will assist residential workers and carers—and the agency for which they work—in meeting mandated requirements for the provision of residential OOHC relevant to the provision of healthy food and access to sport and recreation.



HEALing Matters includes the provision of six professional development modules and three additional resource modules



Module 1. This domain covers strategies to help residential workers and carers build a reciprocal relationship with a young person, where they really get to know the young person and, in turn, they get to know and trust the residential workers and carers. Being able to offer personalised care and knowing what is right for a particular young person, will help create a space to explore healthy lifestyle behaviours, non-judgementally.



Module 2. This domain covers strategies to help residential workers and carers set consistent routines and expectations. Routines that are predictable are important for development, providing a feeling of safety and security. They can also help a young person to learn how to receive care, and how to show care to others.



Module 3. How we 'do food' and the routines and rituals that this involves interlinks with our values, and how we care for others and ourselves. This domain covers strategies that will help residential workers and carers use food to create a homely, family atmosphere inside the residential home, and help young people learn about their relationships with food.



Module 4. Participation in both structured and unstructured physical and/or recreation activities provides an everyday opportunity to help young people feel connected, to form new relationships and gain a sense of belonging. This domain covers strategies to help residential workers and carers look for opportunities to help young people build physical activity into their everyday routines.



Module 5. This domain covers strategies to help residential workers and carers identify the health care needs of young people in care, as well as behaviour change techniques to help you encourage healthy lifestyle behaviours. In this module, we provide residential workers and carers with the facts, then show them different ways to help achieve a healthy living environment.



Module 6. This domain covers strategies to help residential workers and carers reflect on the impact of a young person's behaviour on their own thoughts and feelings and will help them identify opportunities to maintain their own physical, mental and emotional health. More specifically, Module 6 was designed to help residential workers and carers deal with the stress and challenging interactions they often face as a residential worker or carer.



DISCUSSION BOARD

This is a chance to for residential workers and carers to share their thoughts and experiences including what they have learned or what they might be having difficulty with.



RECIPES

From breakfast to lunch, dinner and snacks, we have residential workers and carers covered when it comes to healthy and nutritious recipes that are easy and won't break the budget.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Here residential workers and carers will find a wide range of practical and easy-to-use resources and tools to help them apply what they have learned throughout the modules.