

Working in the aged care and disability sector

Is it the right fit for you?

Use this self-reflection tool to help you think about your personal style and preferences and whether you'll be a good fit to work in the aged care and disability services sector. Start by answering the questions below (marking each box with a tick) about your personal and working style.

My personal style	Mostly	At times	Not often
I like working with people and am committed to supporting them to live full and dignified lives			
I'm able to sense how others are feeling and adapt my behaviour to suit			
I feel like I'm good at supporting others through physical and emotional challenges			
I can neutralise stressful or emotional situations			
I'm able to look on the bright side of a situation			
I'm confident in using my own judgment to find ways around problems and make good decisions			
I'm able to remain calm and focussed and work through issues when things don't go to plan			
I'm patient and don't get easily frustrated			
I'm caring and concerned about the needs and feelings of others			
If something feels different or doesn't seem right, I'll follow up to find out why			
I respect peoples' right to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision making, and recognise others' values and differences			

My working style	Mostly	At times	Not often
I'm punctual and reliable			
I can prioritise tasks to meet deadlines and keep to a schedule			
I'm confident in interacting with others and communicating clearly			
I'm good at listening and can understand and follow instructions			
I'm confident in seeking out advice or further information if I'm unsure about something			
I'm open to receiving feedback and accepting responsibility for my actions			
I can work independently or in a team to complete my work			
I'm happy to undertake domestic duties (household chores) as part of my role			
I'd feel comfortable working closely (physically) with clients to provide personal care			
I'm comfortable in adapting my working style to meet changing needs and circumstances			

My working style	Mostly	At times	Not often
I understand and can comply with Occupational Health and Safety requirements for the safety of myself and clients			
I can self-reflect and consider things that I've done well and could do better next time			
I'm comfortable working with a range of IT devices to complete my work			
I'm confident that I can prepare and review case notes for my clients and know when to alert my supervisor or other team members			

Now, add up the number of ticks you have in each column and record them below.

Mostly	At times	Not often

If you found that the majority of your responses were in the **'Not often'** column, then a role working closely with clients in the aged care and disability sector may not be the best fit for you. However, there may be other non-client facing jobs in the sector that are a better fit and worth exploring, such as support services within a facility or administration. To learn more about the different types of roles available, read through the role profiles included under the "Explore the different roles available in the sector" section on the [Explore care careers](#) page.

If you ticked **'Mostly'** for the majority of your responses, then you'll identify well with the values that employers in the sector are looking for and should be a good fit for a range of roles in aged care and disability services. Work through the additional questions below to further explore your preferences.

Is aged care my preference?	Yes, this describes me well	No, this doesn't describe me well	Hmm, I'm not sure...
I like talking to older people and providing them with companionship, friendship and support			
I feel strongly about the rights of older people to enjoy the best quality of life			
I'm a 'helper' and enjoy doing tasks to assist others			
I'm flexible and happy to adapt the way I work to help others			

If you answered **'yes'** to most of the above questions, then **working in aged care** and helping older people to enjoy a high quality of life, either in a residential or home care setting, might be your best fit in the sector. If you don't feel like aged care is your best fit, work through the additional questions below.

Is disability services my preference?	Yes, this describes me well	No, this doesn't describe me well	Hmm, I'm not sure...
I feel strongly committed to the rights of people with disability			
I'm a 'supporter' and like to work with people to help them achieve their goals			
I enjoy doing a range of activities and getting out and about in the community			
I'm enthusiastic and enjoy teaching others about my hobbies and interests			
I like working with people of different ages, ability levels and personality types			

If you answered 'yes' to most of the above questions, then **working with people with disability** and supporting them to be empowered and independent in their homes and the community, might suit you best.

You may have found that you don't have a strong preference for working in either aged care or disability services. In which case, you may wish to get experience working in both areas to build your experience and career options.

It's all about the values...

All employers in aged care and disability services, and what they look for in staff, are different. However, some of the values employers often look for include:

- **Compassion** – you're motivated to help others
- **Respect** – you show regard for the feelings and rights of others
- **Integrity** – you're honest, accountable and reliable, and represent the values of your organisation in the work you do
- **Resourcefulness** – you're able to problem solve and find quick and clever ways to overcome difficulties
- **Awareness** – you're perceptive and conscious of what's going on around you
- **Resilience** – you have the ability to adapt and thrive in the face of challenging conditions
- **Reliability** – people can count on you
- **Empowerment** – you like to support others as best you can to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Tips for showcasing your values

- Have a look at the websites of employers you would like to work for and research what values are most important to them.
- Review your answers to the questions throughout this self-reflection tool and pull-out the values that you think are most reflective of you.

When preparing job applications, be sure to write about the values most sought after by that particular employer and how they align with your individual values. Cover off as many values as you can in your cover letter, résumé or during a job interview to show why you're a great fit for the role.

In the aged care and disability services sector, it's important to take every opportunity to show how you'll live your values through the work that you undertake each day, no matter the role you're working in.

Now, think about the type of environment you'd like to work in.

Do you prefer working indoors or outdoors, or a mix of both?

Area	Yes/No
Indoors	
Outdoors	
Don't mind/mix of both	

Do you like to work in a lively and bustling environment, or somewhere a bit quieter?

Area	Yes/No
Livelier environment	
Quieter environment	

Do you enjoy working at a fast pace, or at a steadier pace?

Area	Yes/No
Faster pace	
Steadier pace	

Do you work best when following detailed instructions provided by your supervisor, or when you can work more independently and find your own way to complete tasks?

Area	Yes/No
Follow instructions	
Work more independently	

Do you like being active and doing tasks that involve physical strength, such as lifting and using equipment?

Area	Yes/No
I like doing physical work	
I don't enjoy physical work	

Do you enjoy constantly interacting with other people (such as clients and co-workers), or prefer limited interaction with other people?

Area	Yes/No
I prefer to work with people most of the time	
I prefer to work with people some of the time	
I prefer to work alone	

Residential aged care

If the below list describes your preferences, then working in a residential aged care environment might be the best fit for you.

- **You prefer working at the one site, without the need to travel too much.**
- **You like working in a lively and fast-paced working environment.**
- **You prefer working in a team.**
- **You like undertaking a schedule of tasks in a structured working environment.**
- **You like interacting with a range of clients each day.**

In residential aged care, much of your working day will be indoors (for most jobs) and in the one location, without much travel required. You're likely to work closely with residents and have regular interactions with co-workers to provide support to residents as part of a team, each with individual tasks. You may work under the supervision of a team leader, who can provide advice and guidance on completing different tasks. In direct care roles, the clients who you support are likely to have higher care needs, and therefore rely on you to help them to undertake activities during the day.

A range of roles are available in residential care, from direct client care roles, to administration and support roles (like food preparation, laundry and cleaning). You can enter residential care to kick-off your career in the sector in a more entry level role (personal care and support, gardening and maintenance, kitchen and cleaning, reception), or in higher level position that requires qualifications and experience (nursing, allied health services, lifestyle activities).

You'll also need to:

- undergo a police check, and possibly, a Working with Vulnerable People check
- be physically fit to undertake your daily duties and to support residents, though for some roles (such as in administration) this isn't as much of a requirement.

In-home aged care

If the below list describes your preferences, then working in a home care environment in aged care might be the best fit for you.

- **You like working at different sites, visiting clients in their homes to provide care and support.**
- **You prefer a quieter working environment where you can work at a steadier pace.**
- **You prefer to work independently and check in with co-workers as required to complete your daily activities.**
- **You like undertaking a range of tasks that may vary each day.**
- **You like working closely with individual clients to build a good rapport and provide them with personalised care and support.**

In a home/community aged care role, you'll often be out and about, working both indoors and outdoors to support clients in their homes and in the community. You'll need to be able to work independently, with limited supervision, providing direct care to clients with a range of different needs. Your daily tasks may be scheduled, but you'll also need to adapt each day to different situations.

You'll also need to:

- undergo a police check, and possibly, a Working With Vulnerable People check
- be physically fit to complete many of your duties.

You may also need a driver's licence and access to a reliable registered vehicle (with comprehensive insurance) to drive yourself to clients' homes and transport clients to and from activities and appointments.

Disability services

If the below list describes your preferences, then working in disability services might be the best fit for you:

- **You enjoy working in range of locations – indoors and outdoors, in the community and in clients' homes.**
- **You like working independently and checking in with co-workers as required.**
- **You like undertaking a range of tasks that may vary each day.**
- **You like working closely with individual clients to build a good rapport and support them to achieve their goals and try new things.**

In a disability services role, you're likely to undertake a variety of tasks each day to support clients to be independent and active in their communities. You'll spend time in clients' homes and with them in the community. You'll often work independently to support clients with different needs, with limited direct supervision.

You'll also need to:

- undergo a police check and a Working With Vulnerable People check
- be physically fit to complete some of your duties.

You may also need a driver's licence and access to a reliable registered vehicle (with comprehensive insurance) to drive yourself to clients' homes and transport clients to and from activities and appointments.

Where to from here?

Now that you've reflected on your personal preferences and working style, use this information to tailor your job applications and conversations with employers in the aged care and disability sector.

Print off this self-reflection tool and attach it to your job application to provide employers with an insight into your values and preferences, and to help them determine where you'll best fit as an employee in their organisation.

Also, work through the [Résumé Tips and Example Résumé document](#) on the Jobs Hub to further polish your application.