Let's yarn about ageing well



Yarning with Families and Communities

Practical guide and checklist
NATSIFACP

Supporting clear, culturally safe yarning
Aged Care Act 2024 **• Strengthened Quality Standards • Statement of Rights**

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Country on which this organisation operates, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. This tool is grounded in the principle that community control is a governance strength, and that Elders are at the centre of all decisions made in their name.

Introduction

This guide supports aged care services to have respectful, culturally safe conversations with Elders, families and community members.

For NATSIFACP providers, yarning is not just a consultation method, it is part of community-controlled governance and accountability to Elders and community. It supports services to listen, understand community priorities, and ensure care reflects culture, connection to Country, and the voices of Elders and families.

Yarning helps services meet their responsibilities under the *Aged Care Act 2024*, including the **Statement of Rights** and requirements to engage with people receiving care, their supporters, and community.

1. Preparing for the yarn (checklist)

Before the conversation, consider:	Completed
Have we spoken with the right people (Elders, community leaders, family)?	☐
Is the location comfortable and culturally appropriate?	☐
Is enough time allowed so the conversation is not rushed?	☐
Do staff have relationships in the community? (i.e. family or long-time residents)	☐
Have we explained clearly why we are asking for input?	☐
Have we sought guidance from appropriate cultural authority (e.g. Elders) on how the conversation should be approached?	☐
Have we made it clear how information shared will be used?	☐
Have we considered whether any topics may be sensitive or require additional care?	☐
Have we ensured participation is voluntary and people feel safe to share or not share?	☐

2. Conversation prompts (Yarning Guide)

Instead of formal questions, you can include prompts like:
What does good aged care support look like for people in this community?
What helps Elders feel respected and safe when receiving care?
Are there cultural practices we should be aware of when providing care?
What are some things services sometimes get wrong?
How can we work better with families and community?
What does feeling safe, respected and heard look like when receiving care?
Are there ways we can better support connection to Country, culture, family or community?
How would you like us to share back what we've heard and what actions we take?

3. During the Yarn

Good practice looks like
Listen more than you speak
Allow people to tell stories rather than forcing direct answers
Avoid interrupting or rushing
Acknowledge different perspectives
Thank people for sharing their experiences
Be aware of power differences. Services are there to listen, not lead
Do not make promises that cannot be kept
Allow silence and reflection, not all responses need to be immediate

4. After the yarn (follow-up checklist)

Consider:	Completed
Have we documented what we heard respectfully and accurately?	☐
Have we shared back with the community what we heard?	☐
Have we clearly explained what actions will be taken as a result?	☐
Have we explained transparently if something cannot change, and why?	☐
Have we built the learnings into service planning, care delivery, or governance processes?	☐
Have we identified how we will continue the conversation (not just a one-off engagement)?	☐

5. Closing the loop with community

Yarning is part of an ongoing relationship, not a one-off activity. Services should ensure
Community understands what has changed as a result of their input
Feedback is shared in a way that is accessible and meaningful
Ongoing opportunities for input are provided
Trust is built through consistent follow-through over time

Link to Governance

Insights from yarning should inform board and governance discussions, including service planning, quality improvement, and cultural safety practices.



