

# Aged Care Careers

A workbook for carers





## Introduction

As a carer you already have a range of skills to offer a potential employer. This workbook is a guide to help you recognise these skills so you can return to or enter paid work with more confidence and in an area which interests and fulfills you, such as the Aged Care industry.

It is common for carers to experience a lack of confidence when returning to the workforce, as they might have had gaps in their career or work history due to their caring responsibilities. Other carers may be entering the workforce for the first time which can be daunting.

We know from our work in this area that one key technique to build confidence is to become aware of your strengths and the transferable skills that you have acquired throughout your life including through your role as a carer.

This workbook focuses on transferable and employability skills, what they are, why employers value them, and how you can showcase your skills.

There is also a section dedicated to deciding whether a career in Aged Care is right for you. This workbook will provide you with comprehensive resources to make an informed decision.

# Questions to Ask Yourself Before Choosing a Career in Aged Care

Before embarking on any new career path, it is essential to consider carefully if the chosen path will suit you. For example, how will it fit in with your current commitments as a carer? How will you prepare for future changes and the demands of the job/employers?

## Here are some questions to ask yourself before embarking on a new career path in Aged Care:

- › At what times and days can I work?
- › Am I able to work on-site or only from home?
- › What are my likely travel times to potential workplaces?
- › What flexibility could an employer offer in a particular work role for me to accommodate my caring responsibilities (if applicable)?
- › What workwear and equipment will I need in my future role and how can I obtain them?
- › Will I need financial support to acquire workwear or equipment?
- › What skills, energy and other resources will be required for a role I am currently considering?
- › What is the work environment like in that role?

**Tip:** Speak to people you know and trust in your circles to gather insights, or for desktop research consult resources such as [Labour market insights](#).

# Job Market Research

Before focusing on a specific job or career path, it's crucial to understand the current and future demand for jobs in your local area and the qualifications employers are seeking.

Engaging directly with professionals in your chosen industry can provide valuable insights into training options, advertising platforms, networking groups and key employers to connect with.

Various resources are available to enhance your understanding of viable job options and the necessary steps to secure your desired position.

Start by exploring your preferred job using online recruitment websites, as provided in the links below. Examine the selection criteria, salaries and job conditions in advertisements to determine if a role aligns to your goals, you meet the requirements or if additional qualifications are necessary.

Once you identify key employers you're interested in, consider researching them via their websites. This can offer insights into their recruitment methods, advertising strategies and the core values that define their organisation.

## Job Market Research Resources

Here are some resources to guide your job market research into the Aged Care sector:

- › A brief overview of how to enter the Aged Care sector and what is involved  
[www.carecareers.com.au/carecareers-in-victoria](http://www.carecareers.com.au/carecareers-in-victoria)
- › Information on industries, jobs in demand, skill levels required, average salaries across different industries and future projections  
<https://labourmarketinsights.gov.au/occupation-profile/aged-and-disabled-carers?occupationCode=4231>
- › Resources and links to support individuals in finding and securing new employment opportunities, as well as planning for their future career paths  
[www.whatsnext.dese.gov.au/get-your-next-job](http://www.whatsnext.dese.gov.au/get-your-next-job)
- › Insights from the National Skills Commission employer surveys and other current authoritative sources to enhance your understanding of employer preferences, aiding in better alignment with their expectations  
<https://labourmarketinsights.gov.au>



## Job Search Websites

You can find job opportunities on the following websites:

- › Roles in not-for-profit organisations, Australia-wide  
[www.ethicaljobs.com.au](http://www.ethicaljobs.com.au)
- › Roles in the Victorian Public sector, including caring roles  
[www.careers.vic.gov.au/jobs](http://www.careers.vic.gov.au/jobs)
- › Roles and career advice for job seekers across all major industries, Australia-wide  
[www.seek.com.au](http://www.seek.com.au)  
<https://au.indeed.com>
- › A job board finder or 'aggregate' that gathers jobs directly from job search engines including Seek, industry associations and company websites  
[au.jora.com](http://au.jora.com)
- › The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) is an Australian Government initiative supporting job seekers  
[www.djsir.vic.gov.au](http://www.djsir.vic.gov.au)

# Transferable Skills for Carers

Carers bring several qualities into a workplace that can positively impact the work environment, enhancing the overall experience for both colleagues and clients. Some of these qualities include:

- › **Compassion:** Carers possess a deep sense of compassion and empathy. They genuinely care about the wellbeing and needs of others, demonstrating understanding and support.
- › **Patience:** Carers understand the importance of patience, especially when working with individuals who may require additional time and assistance. They can remain calm and composed in challenging situations.
- › **Communication:** Effective communication is a key skill of carers. They are skilled at listening attentively, expressing themselves clearly and understanding non-verbal cues. They can effectively convey information and ensure the needs of individuals are met.
- › **Adaptability:** Carers are adaptable and flexible in their approach. They can adjust their caregiving methods based on individual preferences, changing circumstances and varying needs.
- › **Problem-solving:** Carers possess strong problem-solving skills. They can quickly assess situations, identify challenges and find appropriate solutions to ensure the wellbeing and safety of those under their care.
- › **Respect and dignity:** Carers treat individuals with respect and dignity, valuing their uniqueness and fostering a sense of equality. They uphold the rights and autonomy for whom they care.
- › **Dependability:** Carers are reliable and dependable. They understand the importance of punctuality, consistency and fulfilling commitments. Their reliability builds trust and confidence in their abilities.
- › **Teamwork:** Carers understand the value of collaboration and teamwork. They can work effectively with colleagues, families and other professionals to provide comprehensive care and support.
- › **Emotional resilience:** Carers possess emotional resilience, allowing them to navigate emotionally challenging situations and maintain a positive attitude. They can provide comfort and reassurance to those in their care.
- › **Continuous learning:** Carers have a commitment to continuous learning and professional development. They seek opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills, staying up to date with best practices and advancements in their field.

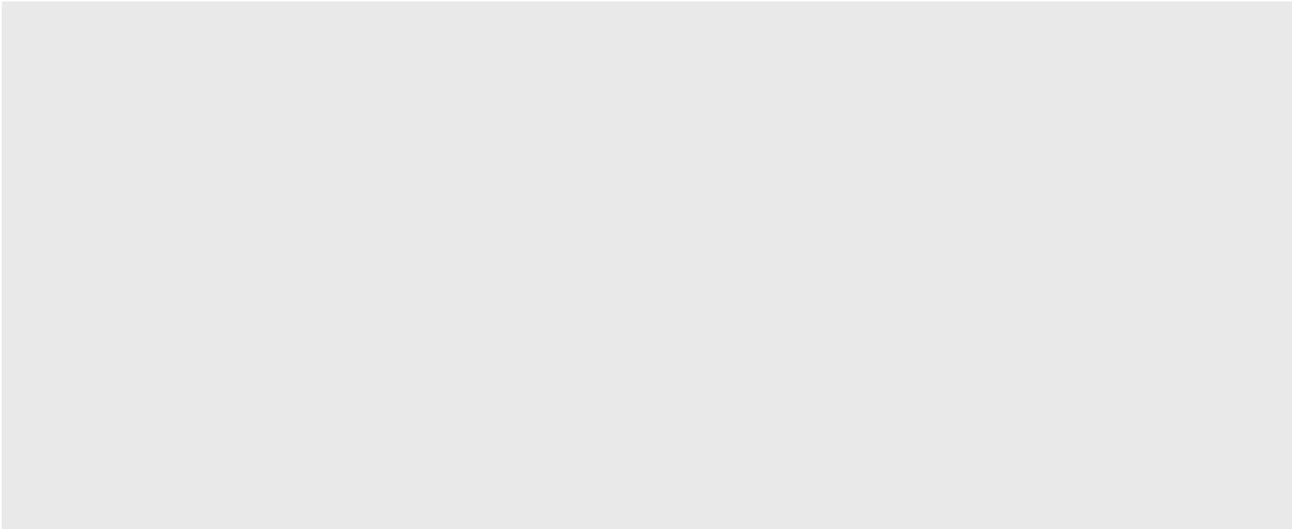
These qualities contribute to a positive and nurturing workplace environment, where individuals receiving care feel supported, respected, and empowered. Carers play a vital role in improving the quality of life for those they serve and creating a compassionate and inclusive work culture.

# Workbook Activity

Chose two transferable skills from the list above that standout for you:

- 1. ....
- 2. ....

How could these be valuable in a workplace? Can you think of a time when you applied transferable skills?





# Top 9 Employability Skills All Employers Want

These top nine employability skills are identified as necessary to succeed in any job and are valued by employers across all industries.

Keep in mind that your personal capabilities, based on your life skills, are like a toolbox available for you to use in any work environment.

These skills are useful not only to find a job but to maintain and succeed in it. They include:

1. Communication
2. Teamwork
3. Adaptability / Resilience
4. Problem Solving
5. Initiative / Enterprise
6. Planning / Organising
7. Self-Management
8. Learning / Growth Mindset
9. Technology

# 1. Communication Skills

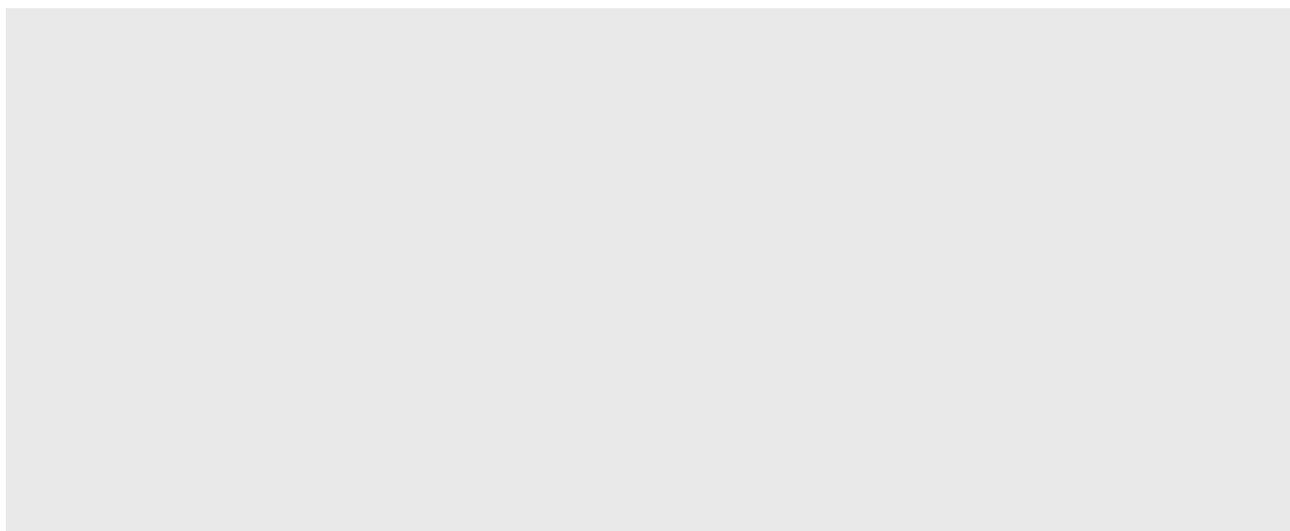
Communication skills contribute to productive and harmonious relations between employees and customers. Communication skills include:

- › Listening and understanding
- › Speaking clearly and directly
- › Writing to the needs of the audience
- › Reading independently
- › Empathising
- › Persuading effectively
- › Negotiating responsively
- › Understanding the needs of internal and external customers
- › Establishing and using networks
- › Being assertive
- › Sharing information
- › Speaking and writing in languages other than English

**An example from a retail workplace:** *Part of my role in retail sales required me to communicate with customers to sell them a product. I used skills such as active listening to ensure I understood their needs and always spoke clearly and directly to ensure customers understood what I said. As a result, I exceeded sales targets and secured return business for the company.*

## Workbook Activity

Write down an example from your previous experience where you used effective communication. What was the outcome/result?



## 2. Teamwork Skills

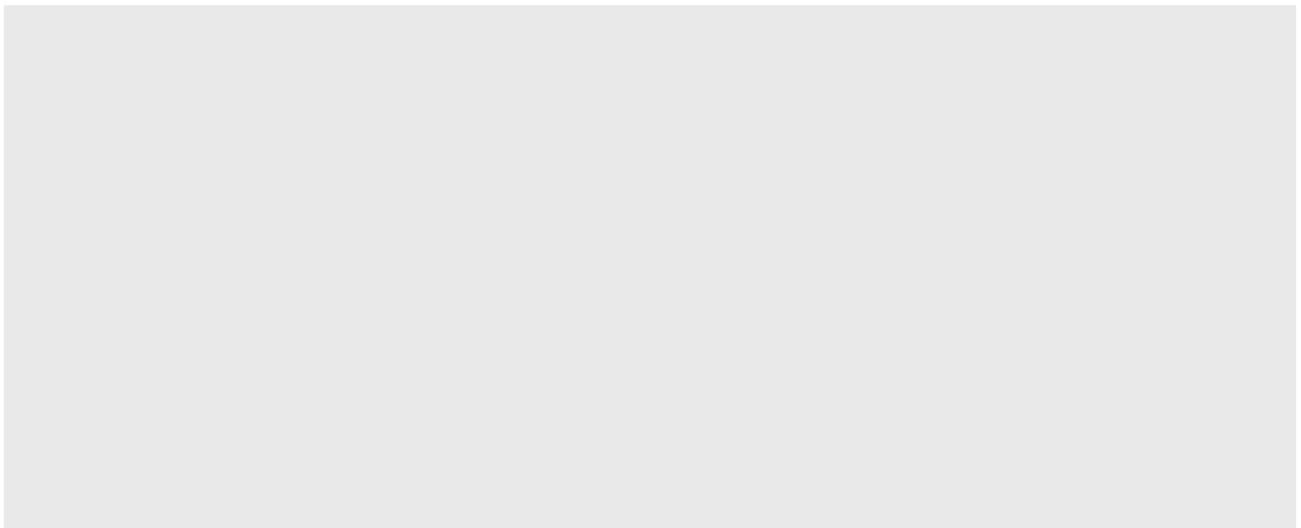
Teamwork skills contribute to productive working relationships and outcomes. Teamwork skills include:

- › Working with people of different ages, gender, race, religion or political persuasion.
- › Working as an individual and as a member of a team.
- › Knowing how to define a role as part of a team.
- › Applying teamwork skills to a range of situations.
- › Planning and crisis problem solving.
- › Identifying the strengths of team members.
- › Coaching, mentoring and giving feedback.

**An example from a study context:** *As a student, I was involved in group work to complete an assignment. I participated by partnering with those assigned to my group, contributed through my strengths in research skills and completed all tasks assigned to me specifically. I worked collaboratively with the other students to complete the project on time and to a high standard. The entire group received a high grade and successfully completed the subject.*

### Workbook Activity

Write down an example or scenario from your previous experience where you used team work to fulfill a job requirement or obtain a positive outcome.



# 3. Adaptability / Resilience

Adaptability and resilience contribute to productive working relationships and outcomes. Adaptability and resilience skills are about:

- › The ability and willingness to change actions and plans to overcome present and future challenges.
- › Demonstrating creativity and innovation = The ability to think of ideas and create solutions to problems without clearly defined structures.
- › Demonstrating a future orientation and growth mindset (“not yet”).
- › An optimistic disposition with a focus on obtaining the skills and knowledge required to transition into a career / job.
- › Opportunity Recognition = The practice of seeing and experiencing problems as opportunities to create solutions.

**Example from a hospitality workplace:** *As a waiter at a busy cafe, I have to manage several tasks – all of them competing for my time and attention. This was difficult for me when I started because my previous jobs were in quieter, less busy environments. It has taken me a good six months to adapt to this new style of working with some coaching from my manager. Now I am not so stressed, especially at busy times, and feel proud that I have successfully adapted to a different work environment.*

## Workbook Activity

Do you have an example or scenario from your previous work/life experience where you had to adapt quickly to a changing situation or be resilient?

## 4. Problem-Solving Skills

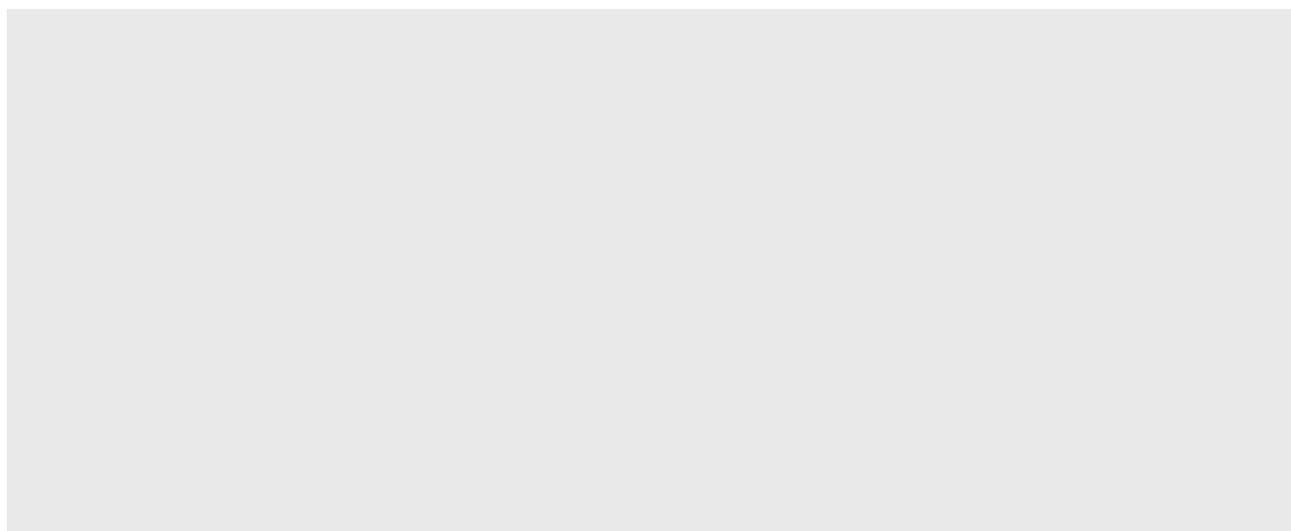
Problem-solving skills contribute to productive outcomes. Problem-solving skills include:

- › Developing creative, innovative options and practical solutions
- › Showing independence and initiative in identifying and solving problems
- › Solving problems in teams
- › Applying a range of strategies to problem solving
- › Using mathematics (including financial management) to solve problems
- › Applying problem-solving strategies across a range of areas
- › Testing assumptions using data
- › Resolving customer concerns in relation to complex project issues

**An example from an administrative workplace:** *During my role as receptionist at a doctor's clinic, it came to my attention that many patients failed to attend their appointments. I researched text messaging technology, presented this information to the Clinic Manager and implemented the process of sending a text message reminder to clients the day before their appointment. This solution increased the number of patients who kept their appointments, helped schedules to be maintained and enabled patient health to be upheld.*

### Workbook Activity

Can you think of a time when you were expected to use problem-solving techniques to overcome an obstacle or solve an issue within a workplace?



# 5. Initiative / Enterprise Skills

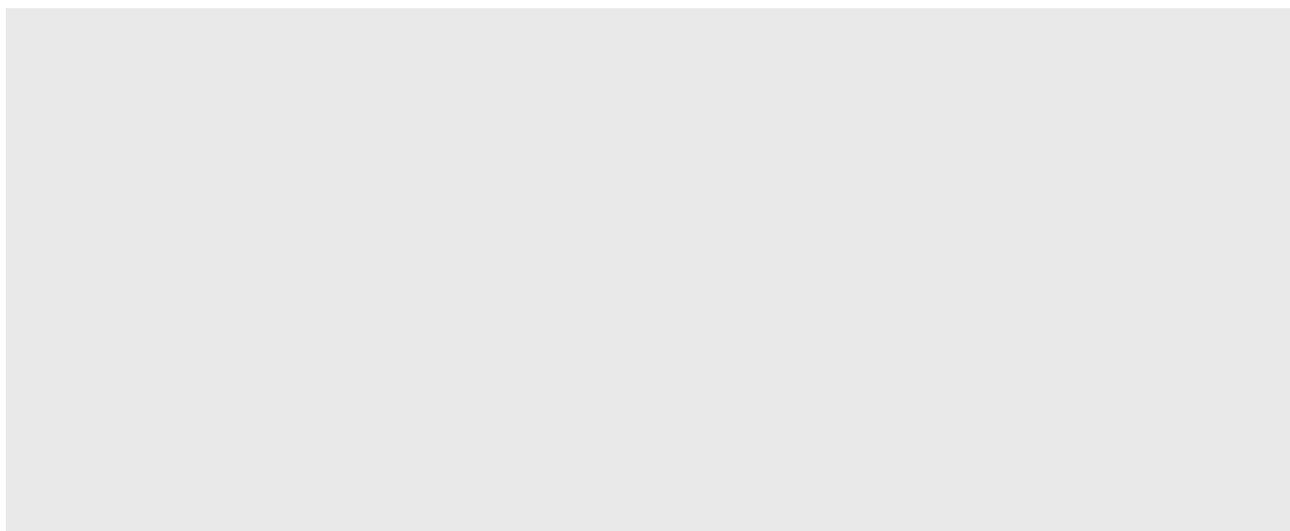
Initiative and enterprise skills contribute to innovative outcomes. Initiative and enterprise skills include:

- › Adapting to new situations
- › Developing a strategic, creative, long-term vision
- › Being creative
- › Translating ideas into action
- › Generating a range of options
- › Identifying opportunities not obvious to others
- › Initiating innovative solutions

**Example from a business context:** *Running a successful gym depends on maximising membership. To promote the business, I organised a fundraiser for a local charity at the gym. The fundraiser included workouts to compete in, involved local businesses supplying food and beverages and the gym donated prizes for a raffle. The fundraiser expanded local awareness of my gym, initiated partnerships with local businesses and increased membership.*

## Workbook Activity

Can you think of a time where you had to think outside the box to achieve a positive result?



# 6. Planning / Organising Skills

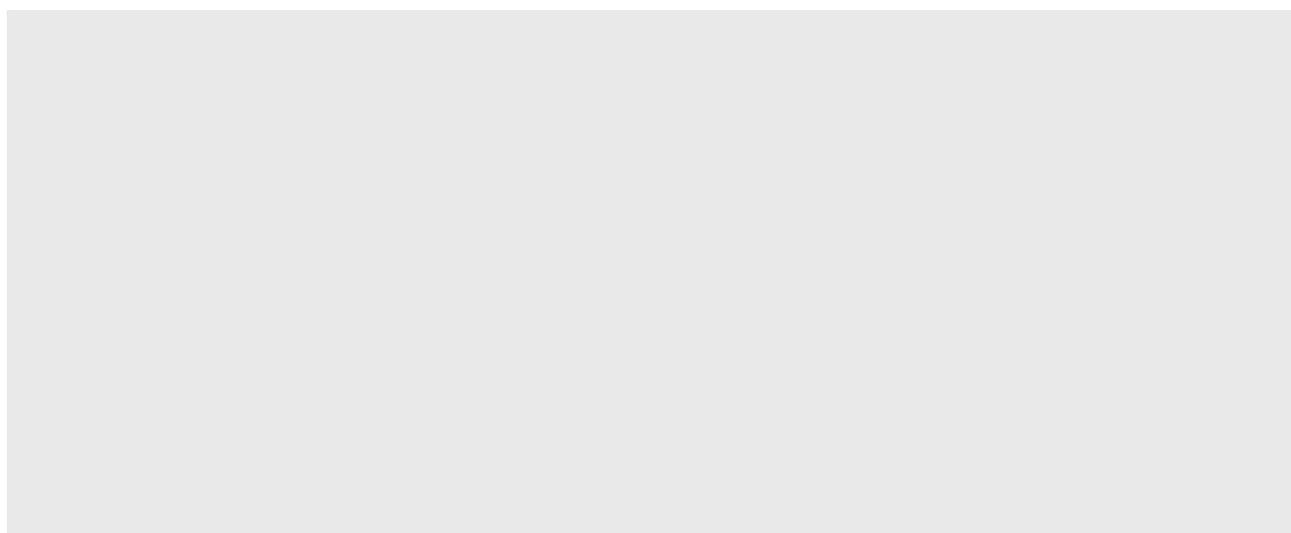
Planning and organising skills contribute to short-term and long-term strategy. Planning and organising skills include:

- › Establishing a vision and clear project goals and deliverables
- › Planning and managing timelines, tasks, priorities and resources
- › Being resourceful, taking initiative
- › Adapting resources to cope with and make informed decisions and contingencies
- › Participating in continuous improvement processes
- › Predicting - weighing up risk, evaluating alternatives
- › Collecting, analysing and organising information
- › Understanding business systems and their relationships

**Example from a project management context:** *Project managing jobs requires me to meet pre-determined deadlines. I use an Outlook calendar, synched to my phone to manage my activities and due dates regardless of where I am located on the worksite. This ensures I am organised, can plan my workload efficiently, stay on budget and meet targeted timelines.*

## Workbook Activity

Do you believe you are good at planning and organising? Share an example where you have had to use these skills.



# 7. Self-Management Skills

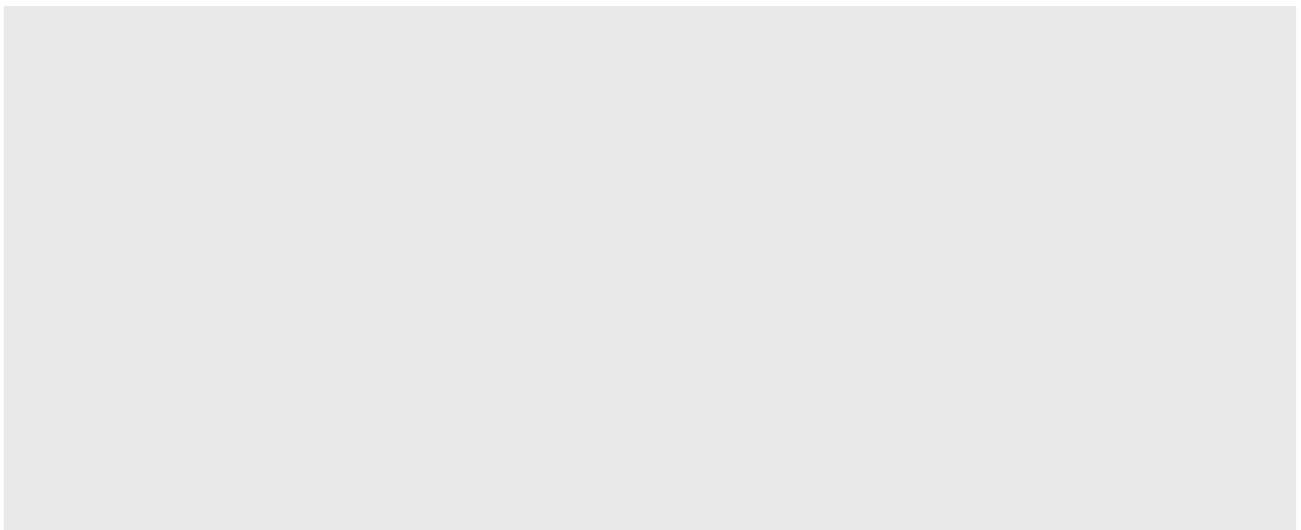
Self-management skills contribute to employee satisfaction and growth. Self-management skills include:

- › Having a personal vision and goals
- › Articulating own ideas and vision
- › Having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and vision
- › Evaluating and monitoring own performance
- › Taking responsibility
- › Time management
- › Conflict management

**Example from a general workplace:** *All staff in my organisation are required to complete a 'Performance Development Plan' and list 'Key Performance Targets'. I find this a useful activity to ensure I keep on task and complete my role as expected. I review this document on a regular basis and feel a great sense of satisfaction when meeting these targets and setting new ones.*

## Workbook Activity

Self-management skills for carers are likely to be one of their superpowers due to the number of balls they have in the air at any one time. Think of an example in your previous work experience where you have had to self-manage.



# 8. Learning / Growth Mindset

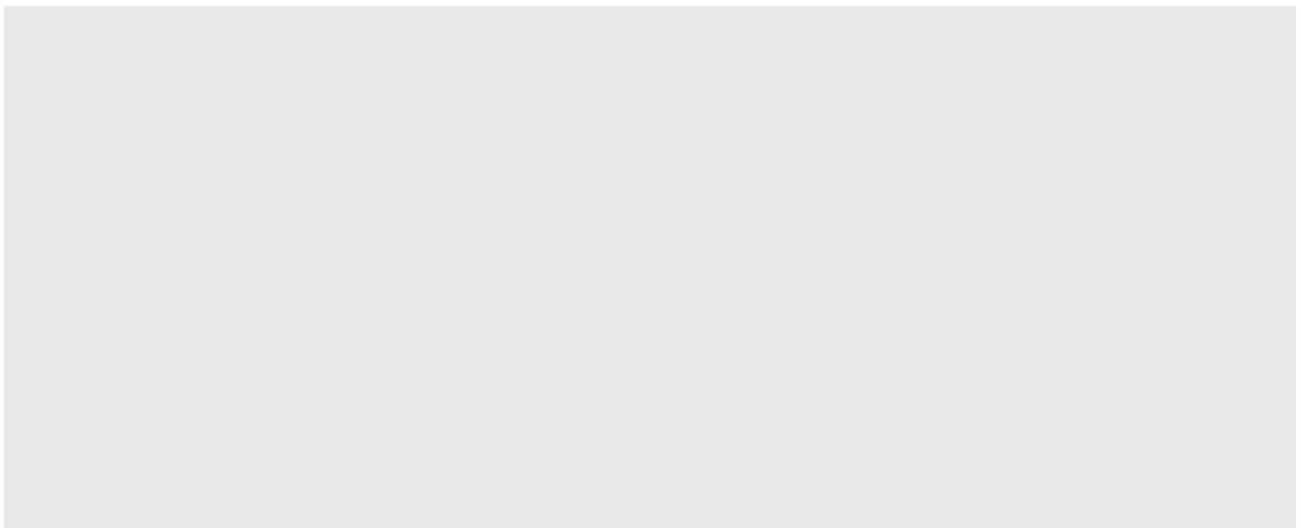
Learning skills contribute to ongoing improvement and expansion. Learning skills include:

- › Managing own learning with enthusiasm
- › Being prepared to invest time and effort
- › Being willing to learn in any setting - on and off the job
- › Being open to new ideas and techniques
- › Using a range of mediums to learn
- › Applying learning to 'technical' issues and 'people' issues
- › Contributing to learning in the workplace by sharing skills
- › Acknowledging the need to learn in order to accommodate change

**Example from a retail workplace:** *After a few months of working in a large department store, I realised I needed to brush up on my communication skills. I asked my supervisor if there was some training I could undertake or a senior worker who could mentor me. The supervisor provided some options for online courses which my workplace funded, and I also 'shadowed' a senior worker for a week. After completing an online course and observing the senior worker, I had more confidence in communicating with customers and managing difficult conversations.*

## Workbook Activity

Can you think of an example where your commitment to learning has allowed you to move in a new direction or assist in an area you would not otherwise have been able to?



# 9. Technology Skills

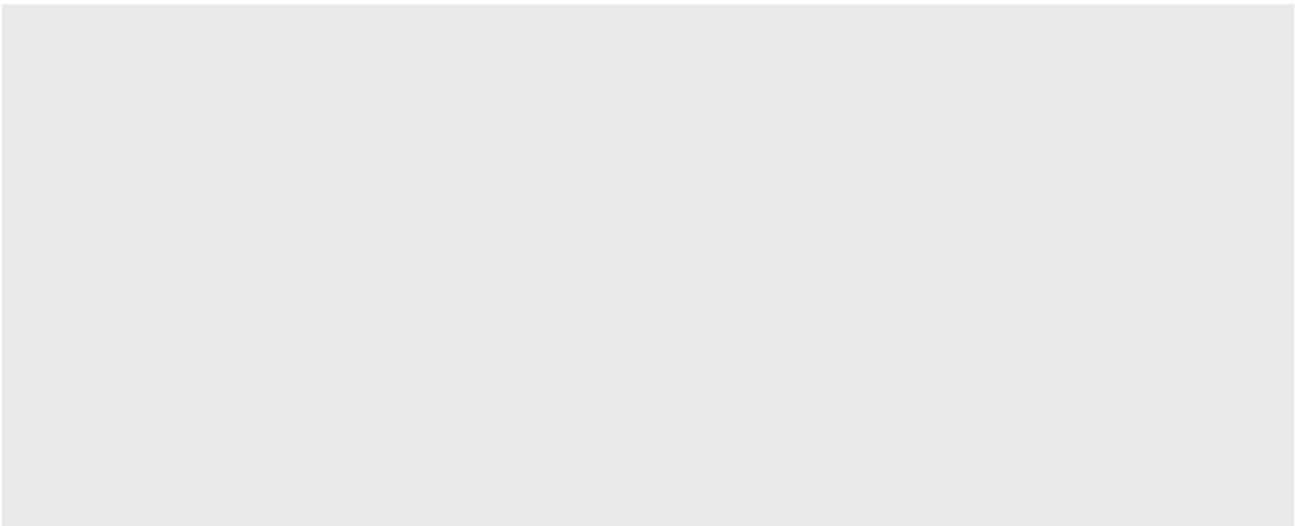
Technology skills contribute to effective execution of tasks. Technology skills include:

- › Having a range of basic IT skills
- › Applying IT as a management tool
- › Using IT to organise data
- › Being willing to learn new IT skills
- › Having the occupational health and safety knowledge to apply technology

**Example from an administrative workplace:** *Being a Facilities Officer requires me to keep track of the company's assets. These assets are kept on a specific database like Microsoft Excel. My existing knowledge of the Microsoft suite enabled me to understand and utilise the company's database without difficulty. My ability to do so kept records accurate.*

## Workbook Activity

Technology skills are becoming increasingly important, how confident are you in this area? Do you have a scenario where you have had to implement or learn a new technology?



# Closing Considerations, Tips and Resources

Choosing a new career is a significant decision and an exciting one.

In this workbook we have provided you with resources to:

1. Conduct your upfront market research
2. Decide whether a career in Aged Care is right for you
3. Identify your skills relating to a career in Aged Care.

We hope you have found these useful.



If you would like to connect further with Carers Victoria, please visit our website and consider becoming a member [www.carersvictoria.org.au/Membership](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/Membership)

# Notes

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



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Carers Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work, the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation, and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the continuing connection to land and waters. Sovereignty was never ceded.