



## Speaking from Experience *Grief & Older People*

### Transcript for chapter 5 of 6: We're not invisible

**Wendy** - I don't think, in general, society places much value in older people. Not in general. It happens in pockets, but I don't think in general it does.

**Edith** - We want to be noticed, we want to be accepted and we don't want to be invisible, which is what you feel. When you're walking along a street, you can sometimes, not everybody is like that, but there's an exuberance about young people that, without thinking about it, probably see us as a bit of a nuisance because we don't walk as fast. We block up the streets a bit.

**Ellen** - Young people view older people in a very negative way. I resent that to quite an extent. Not just for myself, but it's a lack in their upbringing.

**Reg** - In my day, when you walked around, you didn't see many aboriginal people. You didn't see many black people, you know, dark skinned people. That's one of the most noticeable things today, is when you look in the street, you see all these dark skinned people, Asians, Africans, Indians, Sri Lankans - heaps of different nationalities. When I was growing up, it was pretty rare to see a black person. Even today, with black people I look at, we acknowledge our colour.

**Edith** - I know they contribute to their family members. Many older people look after their grandchildren, and so all sorts of community work. I think we have a real place in society. We need a society that accepts older people as part of the population and always will be. Not to be seen as a nuisance.

**Wendy** - I think we would rather not face up to the fact that people are living older. They're going to need care and attention for a lot longer than they ever used to.

**Edith** - We now have our children who are in all sorts of places around the world. There's not that strong family network that there was at one time. It's very hard for many older people that have relatives, family like sons and daughters, in places like Sydney and overseas. That nucleus has disintegrated over a number of years, and I think society has to recognise that.

**Wendy** - I don't really like the idea of retirement villages, where everyone within an acre is in the same age bracket. I feel there's no stimulation there. It's nice to mix with people your own age, but there should be the opportunities to mix with people of all ages. Then every age group benefits. Older people are kept younger by the views of the younger people, and kept up to date with things that are happening. And the younger people are learning from the older generation.

**Edith** - There's a loss of autonomy once you go into a nursing home. When the rules of your life are changed from what they were when you were outside. No matter how good the nursing home is, it's never going to compensate for what you've lost.



**Wendy** - Until that view of a nursing home is changed, it's always going to be difficult for families to put family members in nursing homes.

**Margaret and Ray** - Councils and government are trying to keep people active with groups for the older people. But then it's up to you to yourself to do it.

**Edith** - We need to be looking at some way of developing the confidence of older people. I know there is a fear because your physical capacities aren't quite what they were like.

**Margaret and Ray** - If you lose your mobility, it certainly does make life quite difficult.

**Edith** - Lots of people don't go out at night because they're frightened of something happening on the tram or the train. That is a real fear, but it relates to what governments are doing to older people and to the public, in general. Taking away their services, taking away their guards, taking away their tram conductors. So, nothing is easy anymore.