





-  Master - Quality and compliance officer - Charmaine Collins
-  Intermediate - Senior Support Worker - Kay Wilson
-  Beginner - Community Registered Nurse - Taylor Matthews




 My name is Taylor Matthews and I work here at ARRCs Darwin Community Care and I'm one of the Community Registered Nurses. I was also a Support Worker for about ten months and then I completed my Bachelor of Nursing/Science degree before I came into this role.


Some of the major tasks that I do in my job from day to day include things such as tending to people's wounds, medication administration, being really aware of what medications my clients are taking if they need their blood sugars done or if they need their blood pressure taken prior and ensuring that people have the right medications that they need and that they're taking them correctly.

We inform our support workers on any issues that our clients have and if they need to do any sort of special extra care for those as well. We also organise our clients in their day to day lives. Some people need appointments scheduled, they need their days planned.

 My name is Charmaine Collins; I work for the Australian Regional and Remote Community Services [ARRCS]. I'm the Quality and Compliance Officer. I have an Associate Diploma in Education/Childcare, I also have a Certificate III & IV in Aboriginal Health Work. I also have a Certificate III & IV in Aged Care and Home & Community Services and a Certificate in Small Business Management.

My job responsibilities involve ensuring that staff and service managers are meeting quality and compliance.

 Hi my name is Kay. I work for ARRCs Community Care, Darwin and I'm one of the Senior Support Workers here. My formal qualifications that I have done are Certificate III in Aged Care. My major role is caring for older people and personal care, after care, shopping, preparing meals, we do have meals on wheels, social visits, because a lot of our clients live on their own and we're the only social contact they do have during the day. We do domestic cleaning, do all sorts of everyday duties. Also we take them to all of their doctor's appointments, any medical stuff we do all that for them.

 My tasks for each day including networking with the Service Managers also Support Workers, I do training. I do quite a lot of travelling which is all over the Territory because we have sites in Katherine, Tennant Creek, Darwin, Mutitjulu and Docker River and that entails auditing, ensuring that the sites are meeting quality and compliance and meeting the residential and home care standards.





I do have a Senior RN, who's above me and who kind of co-ordinates what I do in my day to day job. So if I ever have an issue they would be my first port of call. But if they're having issues with my problem and can't solve it then and there, we would go to our Service Manager whose door is always open and is always very supportive and always tries to help us.



My working hours here at ARRCs are generally between 8:30 to 4:30, so we generally do 7.5 hours at work and it's generally Monday to Friday. So it's really good. Especially being a nurse where some of the other options are shift work.

Being late for work is kind of never really an option, we do have a fit schedule for our clients and generally the day or a few days before we'll ring up and, you know, let them know that we are coming around at a certain time of the day. So it's really important that we stay on schedule and stick to it for our clients.



My hours vary each day. All depends how we are going with our clients. Sometimes you might go into a client's home they might have had a fall so that's beyond our control, so sometimes I need to work longer hours. With our clients we've got to make sure that we get there on time, we're leaving at the right time. So if we're late we just usually ring our Co-ordinator or we ring the Case Manager.



On average, when I'm based at corporate office it's generally an eight hour day. There has been times where I've had to work weekends but generally it's Monday to Friday. The time management strategies that I use is I utilise my Microsoft Outlook calendar and I also plan the week before. I prioritise my workload, and I ensure that I've allocated enough time to complete tasks. Of course there's always unexpected tasks that will pop up so I will prioritise those as they arise. If I didn't organise my day, my day would turn into chaos and also my managers wouldn't get the information they needed from me.



New staff entering into the industry need to understand the personalised care and person centred care and adapting that to each individual through their care plans and their care delivery.



In my job as a Support Worker, the most challenging part of it is all clients are different. Especially with the clients that have dementia or Alzheimer's, you have to work out strategies. You need that communication with the clients. And the best way to do that is just be a good listener with your clients and understand what they are going through.



One of the most challenging skills I've had to wrap my head around and had to get good at is the administration side of being a Community Registered Nurse. And it's filling out a lot of the forms and being aware of what ARRCs's policies are and ensuring that I'm compliant with the forms and ensuring that I'm filling them out correctly as well. I do a lot of ordering of our resources in the office and that do lots of wound care supplies. I also document when I do wound care and what the wound looks like and really go into detail in what I've done for my client.





Some of the reports that I have to provide my managers are the program statistic reports that I collate for them and do a consolidated report. I also do site reports after I've visited a site which goes to my Operations Manager. Some of the other reports I do are board reports and end of month reports and they can be financial or program specific.



There is a lot of paper work involved in my job. But there's two major important ones that we need to make sure that we fill out. The first one is the client visitation record sheet where we have to write the time we get there, the time we leave, then date it, write our name and sign it.

The second one is the most important one, is the progress notes. The progress notes is all the things that you've done at the client's house, step by step so the next person knows what's been going on with the client.



The most challenging aspect is the changes to the Aged Care sector and implementing those at all the different sites and adopting paper work to introduce those changes. What I do outside of work to build my skills to help me with my job is I do actually read a lot of the manuals and guidelines that are part of my role for Quality & Compliance to ensure that I am delivering the correct information.



Being an RN [Registered Nurse], we have to expand our knowledge base pretty much all the time. So even when I'm at home and not at work, I do lots of journal article readings and keeping up with the kind of the evidence based practices of my job.



Working in Aged Care can be very emotional. We do have a service where we can ring up and there's counsellors and that that we can talk to about anything like our personal life, a death, like from one of your clients or a close friend, we can use that service if we wish to.



Staff need to be supported and understand the processes within the organisation about who can support them and how the organisation can support them.



So some of the work that I do can be quite physical, it involves things like manual handling. I've had a client who's been on the floor and skinned their leg and I've had to help the client back into the chair and that was quite labour intensive. So it's really good that we have our manual handling techniques.



I think it's relevant that we keep ourselves pretty fit, making sure we get enough sleep, eat the right foods and making sure we're using the right techniques like bending our knees, keeping our backs straight, making sure that you are not overusing your body. We do have hoists where we have two people go in to the houses. It's important that you do use this equipment safely and just take your time.



Being a Registered Nurse, our PPE is really important to us and that's things like using gloves, making sure we have our enclosed shoes on and making sure that if we need we have goggles to protect our eyes and safety masks as well.

The most important work health and safety issue that I need to be aware of is keeping and maintaining a sterile field when doing my wound care dressings with my client and that's things like making sure there's no children or pets or anyone that's going to contaminate my field and introduce any infection into my client's wound.





Being a Work, Health and Safety Officer I need to make sure that all my colleagues are all working safe. We have safety meetings every month. I'm the one that usually holds the meetings.



I work very closely with the Work Health and Safety Adviser that we have working with ARRCs. We ensure that legislation changes are delivered to Service Managers and Support Workers this is done through obviously trainings, staff meetings, memos, newsletters, site visits, audits, identifying gaps through work instructions and implementing those changes. This is a significant part of my role as Quality and Compliance.



We have core training every twelve months, so you're always learning, you never know all the different aspects of Aged Care, because Aged Care like, the training is always changing from year to year and that's like some of the medication skills that's always changing.



Working in the Aged Care industry is changing because it's making organisations and service providers more accountable through reporting and our accreditation and quality processes.

I'm involved in leading changes by visiting sites, doing training with the staff and the Service Managers, also mentoring. We have monthly quality meetings which are held between all the Services Managers and the Quality Team.



I do mentor some of my colleagues. I take new staff members out with me on the road to do some orientation. We have just started mentoring groups with our Case Managers, this involves working with ten Support Workers in each group. Some of the Support Workers might need my help with some clients, senior ones, we might have a different strategy for them that they can use.



Here at ARRCs I'm really lucky to have a really good learning environment. We also have weekly team meetings as well where we come together and ensure that we are all sharing ideas and what works and what doesn't.

Being a junior Registered Nurse here at ARRCs, I have a say in some of the things that we do and some of the service changes. But mostly, I have a senior RN who's on top of me [above me], and they're kind of the case manager as well so they have a say in what the client needs and what the client doesn't. We liaise and work together and come up with ideas on how we can best treat our clients.



While I continue my job here at ARRCs I would like to think that as I get more experience and as I'm here a bit longer I can move up to Case Manager and have a bit more say in my client's services. While it would be really good to be a Case Manager I would kind of have to sacrifice my face to face time that I do have with my clients during the day.



I did actually start off as a Support Worker which then lead on to me going into a Team Leader's position, then onto a Service Manager of Community Care Darwin and currently in a role with Quality and Compliance. Anybody else that would be in my position could further progress through to Regional Manager or General Manager, but at this stage I am currently happy in the role that I'm in.

Any potential people that are looking to work in the Aged Care industry there is a good career path which does extend to being able to go on and do your enrolled nursing, your registered nursing, there are quality positions. The Aged Care industry is forever growing and needs to be supported.



I like working with ARRCs, I've been doing community work for the last five and a half years. I'm really looking at doing, clinical nursing, working in the clinics. So I am looking at doing a university degree in allied health system.



Working in the Aged Care industry, some of the rewards that I've taken away from me is how much of a difference I make in these people's lives and how they appreciate me for what I do. And just hearing their experiences and their life stories and you know, having that bit of history.

