

Jan Desbrow, Spiritus Bayside Nurse *Chronic Conditions Self-Management & Palliative Care specialist*

Jan Desbrow is one of many experienced nurses working in Spiritus Community Care. A nurse for over forty years, she loves many aspects of her work.

“I love what I do but it’s no secret that I’m not at all fond of the paperwork.”

She has worked in domiciliary nursing for twenty years and in that time has become respected for her work in two particular areas, that of Palliative Care and working with people who have Chronic Health Conditions. Arthritis, osteoporosis, heart disease, lung disorders, stroke and depression fall into this category and Jan’s skills are put to work in Chronic Conditions Self-Management courses which are run three times annually from the Spiritus Bayside Community Care office.

The courses assist sufferers with a myriad of techniques from fighting frustration and fatigue and making daily tasks easier to managing symptoms and simple methods of relaxation and exercise.

“We give people strategies to break things down into small, more manageable pieces; a few clues to help them breathe easier. There are lots of tricks – for instance you don’t have to run or jog to exercise. You can exercise gently and safely without pain. Additionally there are lots of gadgets to make things easier.”

The Palliative Care courses are equally valuable. They assist people who are struggling with an enormous range of issues such as pain management, financial and welfare issues, grief and loss, and the need to maintain their own health.

Jan and her co-workers have planned a practical caring course and have provided a forum where people can feel comfortable asking questions and discussing their own situation in an open fashion if needed.

“In palliative care, we learn to act at a pace that suits the client and carer. We learn to listen and deal with what’s most important to them at that time. It can be a difficult area but it is richly rewarding”

She has spent a lot of time caring for many senior citizens in her area, from Stradbroke Island and Coochiemudlo to Wynnum and Cleveland.

“To hear their stories leaves me in awe of our senior generation. They have coped with so much – the war, the depression. They have so much to give. However the thing I find so special is I am able to see people as they really are and I can be who I really am too.”

She believes in a continually growing Spiritus, with people at the heart of it.

“This is where we have life: life of patients, relatives, staff and friends and to affect the quality of the day – that is the art of life.”

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