



MEDIA RELEASE

5 November 2008

Keeping in touch with seniors with vision and hearing loss

As we grow older many of us will experience hearing and sight difficulties. Over half of us will lose some hearing and, while less common, one in 12 will also lose vision.

Known as deafblindness, this dual sensory loss affects about 6000 people in WA aged 65 years or older.

To help these people avoid the often isolating effects of deafblindness, WA's Senses Foundation has produced a valuable resource tool for people living and working with older people with hearing and sight loss.

'You and me – keeping in touch' is a DVD and booklet package which offers information, advice and guidance about acquired dual sensory loss, its causes, the impact on older people and practical ways to support people in their homes and the community.

Manager, Community Services, Richard Long says it is a great training tool for aged care and community workers, private healthcare providers and family and friends.

"Deafblindness can be incredibly isolating and can have a significant effect on communication and mobility," says Richard.

"However there are some really practical ways we can make life easier for people with dual sensory loss and the package outlines a whole range of these which can be adapted to suit the particular person."

Richard says these simple but effective measures include:

- Making sure we approach the person from the front;
- Speaking clearly and slowly;
- Ensuring there is the right type of lighting;
- Keeping things in the same place; and
- Having consideration for the size and type of font in written material.

The DVD features an interview with a person with dual sensory loss and offers some guidance to family members or support workers. It also provides links to other relevant training tools.

“For those who live and work with people who have dual sensory loss, the package offers clear information about how we can make a difference and therefore improve the quality of life for older people with hearing and vision difficulties,” says Richard

‘You and me – keeping in touch’ has been produced with funding from the Department of Local Government and Regional Development’s Active Ageing at the Local Level Fund.

The package can be ordered via Senses’ website at www.senses.asn.au. Alternatively please contact the Foundation’s office on 9473 5400. The DVD costs \$48.50 incl. GST (P&H is \$5 within Australia and \$10 for international delivery).

Senses Foundation was formed in 2001 when the Royal WA Institute for the Blind - one of WA’s oldest charities - amalgamated with the WA Deafblind Association.

Senses is now WA’s primary advocate and service provider for people who are deafblind or blind with additional disabilities, providing highly specialised programs and services to improve communication, socialisation, mobility and quality of life for both adults and children.

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