

# A chat, hand massage and the benefit of touch

It is the simple things in life that make people happy. So the saying goes. And as people get older this becomes more important as they lose touch with their social circle.

One of our talented volunteers Narelle, is a qualified aromatherapist who has been volunteering at [MannaCare](http://www.mannacare.org.au) for the past twelve months.

With her mother in Banksia unit, it was a chance conversation with a member of staff which led her straight to Tanya Warms, MannaCare's Volunteers Coordinator.

An aromatherapist for three years, Narelle provides aromatherapy hand massages to our residents. She is passionate about the practice of aromatherapy using essential oils holistically.

Narelle mixes a drop of oil with some cream and blends it in then massages it into the hand. Some residents love it, however, "Some residents don't want any oil and just prefer the hand massage. Some talk, others don't so it has taught me to be a very good listener and not say much," reveals Narelle. She "listens to the residents when they speak and looks for the commonality we all have with each other."

Using a combination of different types of oils, she uses grounding and balancing oils that are nurturing and calming. It is also important reveals Narelle "To avoid oils that impact on the medication."

There is a technique and skill to hand massaging that not everyone is able to do successfully. However, with the residents, this technique becomes redundant states Narelle, "Some of the residents are fragile, and they have less flexibility so technique goes out the window."

Narelle loves the connection and because her mother is a resident of MannaCare, she sees both sides of the coin when it comes to aged care.

"You normally hear negative things about aged care, however, as a daughter of a resident as well as volunteer, I also see the hard work and dedication of staff. This paints a different picture to what you hear or see in the media about aged care and most of the negativity is unfounded."



**For More information about MannaCare:** [www.mannacare.org.au](http://www.mannacare.org.au)