

MEDIA RELEASE

From: Kasey McCulloch, Media Manager, Mercy Health

Event: 6.30pm, Wednesday 26 September 2018
State Library Victoria

Aged care specialist to highlight why residents need to take risks

Supporting older Australians to take more risks goes against what most people think aged care homes should be doing. Yet one aged care expert is trying to find out how people can continue to do the things they love — risky or not — in the last years of their life.

Monash University Consulting Physician in Geriatric Medicine Professor Joseph Ibrahim has been researching Dignity of Risk for aged care residents since 2012.

“Everyone agrees with the principle but no one knows how to do it,” Prof Ibrahim explains.

“Dignity of Risk is allowing a person to make choices that other people might not like. It is the person understanding that they might get hurt but they still choose to do it anyway.”

Prof Ibrahim will present on the Dignity of Risk at a free community forum hosted by Mercy Health at the State Library Victoria on Wednesday 26 September 2018 from 6.30pm. The event will include a screening of Prof Ibrahim’s international award-winning animated short film *Dignity of Risk*, which features an encounter between himself and a patient recently diagnosed with dementia.

Prof Ibrahim says the choices you have as you get older are limited and it is often the small things that mean the most.

“I want to find out how aged care residents can be supported to take more measured risks,” Prof Ibrahim explains. “Nobody wants to spend the last years of their life eating vitamised food and drinking thickened fluids. If someone enjoys drinking a cup of tea and wants to do this, they should be able to.”

Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Officer Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen says the organisation is working to reduce residents’ isolation, boredom and loneliness.

“These are the three biggest factors that result in an early death for the elderly, so we need to find ways to break that cycle,” Adj Prof Cornelissen says.

“Sometimes, a little measured risk taking might be the answer to ensure residents have a more fulfilled and meaningful life. Wherever possible, we will support them to live full lives for the rest of their lives.”

To register for the free Dignity of Risk community forum, visit mercyhealth.com.au/events/dignity-of-risk-community-forum

– Ends –

For interviews and photo opportunities, please contact:

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