

## *Eden Alternative Conference 2016 – It's Time – Dining Intensive*

### *# 18: Please, Sir... May I Have Some More? Maximizing the Dining Experience Through Service Excellence*

*presented by Sally Hopkins*

#### **Introduction:**

Welcome to this Dining Experience Intensive. I have been working in the Hospitality Aged Care Industry for more than 20 years and have always taken the view that where possible we provide the food and a dining experience that an Elder likes or would expect (especially in residential care).

Food is such a subjective and emotional topic. I have no doubt many of you will have heard the food complaints e.g. toast is cold / burnt; poached eggs are too hard; soup is too watery; staff are not smiling when they serve my meal and so on. We need a '**can do**' attitude, not a '**can't do**' attitude with layers of bureaucracy and barriers e.g. Food Safety, the budget won't support this etc.

When we start implementing the Eden Alternative into a care environment or community care setting, application of Eden Principle 8 – Empowerment is one of the most difficult changes to make. This Principle takes time and one of the main areas which is seen to be difficult to change is the dining environment or dining experience. In our efforts to be more person directed, the catering / hospitality area is seen as the most difficult, '**the dining room is the last battle ground for change**'. Many claim, for example, that the catering team won't support change - "they" are obstructing; It's not possible; 'we tried that years ago and it didn't work'. And yet, it doesn't need to be that way. Have we really engaged this key stakeholder group to be a part of the solution or are they continually seen as a problem?

If we consider that eating and dining well add to convivium and wellbeing, then why aren't we doing this? We will explore what others are doing locally and internationally; how to make small changes and engage all stakeholders to raise the standard of dining in community care and residential services.

#### **Your Pre Conference Task:**

When considering your own personal needs / wants / desires in dining and eating, What is really important to you? Please complete the following and bring with you to the conference session. Consider dining at home; dining out; individual food preferences, likes & dislikes; cooking habits, eating habits; favourite foods; service motto; any rituals you follow e.g. **Domain - Meaning** - I have an early cup of hot weak, black tea, in a china cup, when I first wake up, no Sugar.

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**Name:**

**Date:**

<b>Domains of Wellbeing</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Write in the first person – Who Am I? What does this mean for you when considering convivium - food and dining?</b>
<b>Identity</b>	Being well known; having person hood; individuality; wholeness; having a history	
<b>Connectedness</b>	A state of being connected, alive; belonging; engaged; involved; not detached; connected to the past, present, and future; connected to personal possessions; connected to place; connected to nature;	
<b>Autonomy</b>	Liberty; self-governance; self determination; immunity from arbitrary exercise of authority; choice and freedom	
<b>Meaning</b>	Significance; heart; hope; import; value; purpose; reflection; sacred	
<b>Security</b>	Freedom from doubt, anxiety or fear; safe, certain, assured; having privacy, dignity and respect.	
<b>Growth</b>	Development; enrichment; unfolding; expanding; evolving;	

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<b>Joy</b>	Happiness; pleasure; delight; contentment; enjoyment	

**Other notes:**

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## *# 18 - Eden Alternative Conference 2016 – It's Time – Dining Intensive – Case Study*

My name is Mary Poppins and I have lived in this region for 85 years. I was born on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1931 and I'm the eldest of four siblings - 2 brothers (Peter and Alan) and my sister (Naomi). I am a fourth generation Poppins and have always been on or around the family farm my entire life. My mother, Grace, was a gentlewoman and came from a wealthy family of graziers. My father, William, also came from a farming family. Indeed, our forebears were one of the pioneering families in this area.

Our farm was a mixed use producing farm – cattle, dairy, horses, chickens, sheep, citrus fruit and vegetables. I used to collect the eggs, make the bread, butter and cream and cook for the shearers when it was time to shear the sheep. I was an auxiliary member of the local Country Women's Association and I won many competitions at the local fairs for my sponge cakes and chutneys.

When I met Bert I was working in the local cafe as the cook / waitress. I was 19 years old and we married when I was 21 years old. Bert was also 21 when we got married. My husband Bert was a wonderful man, hard working, full of fun and laughter and we used to dance to all the best songs. We loved going to the movies and get dressed up to go to dances when the big bands came to town. We have four children – Sarah, Michael, James and Serena. My husband died 10 years ago. I'm able to make my own tea but can't. My main food likes include a good steak, slow cooked casseroles, pies (sweet and savoury), High Tea, desserts, making chutneys and mustards, drinking sweet sherry and reisling. I love hot tea – milk no sugar; freshly squeezed orange juice, cappuccino and muffins and I love to help others. I don't like to be rushed to eat and love a well set table.

**I hate the food here....**When I arrived at Green Acres, staff filled in a form with my daughter and I. They have, unfortunately, followed it ever since. I'm usually an early riser and like tea and buttered toast with sweet marmalade on the side, around 6am. I like to nap in the afternoon and then go to bed around 10pm. This hasn't happened. Meals follow a routine I could set my clock to. No freshly baked bread now, just that thin sliced stuff. I get luke-warm tea so I can drink it fast and they can get me into bed. After two years of drinking it warm from a plastic mug I would love a hot coffee in a proper china cup. I sometimes get confused around the order of eating my meal as everything is put in front of me at once. My dining companion, May, is also a slow eater and we often don't get to finish our meal as it's whisked away before we've finished, by the kitchen staff. The food is always cold and I'd kill for a good fillet steak with horseradish.

The dining room isn't terribly inviting and I'm constantly feeling anxious and harried. I want to choose the foods that I eat. I can't see a thing without my glasses and need someone to explain the menu if I don't have them. I like hot food to be hot; Cold food to be cold and not tepid.

I sit here in a track suit (which I abhor and have never worn) and that box in the corner talks and smiles but I can't really hear what they say. It looks like staff are enjoying it as they chat and laugh with each other, but they don't smile like that at me or see the longing in my eyes. They seem so busy and it must be hard with so many of us to support.



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Name: **Mary Poppins**

Date:

<b>Domains of Wellbeing</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Write in the first person. What is important to Mary? Where are the gaps? Complete before the conference and bring with you.</b>
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**Other notes:**

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