

The Linker Service

Case Study: UCWB

February 2026



This case study shares the unique voices and experiences of three clients and their Linker, Deval Shah, at UCWB (Uniting Care Wesley Bowden).

RS' experience of the Linker Service

"I like the support I get. It's very positive, there's no judgment and I get the help I need - I know my Linker will help me. And if they need to do research or whatever, they do it and communicate that back to me. Even when they're busy, they'll still help me out.

Sometimes it's a little thing I get help with. I've moved into a new area and I have trouble catching buses because I'm a bit dyslexic, so they'll go with me on a bus to wherever I need to go, because I get stressed and I have no sense of direction. That's what I mean. I don't expect things, but that they just will help me whichever way they can.

I would say that I've got more confidence in myself, and I think that I can communicate better now that I have this support.

'I'm learning to use my voice and be an advocate for myself.'

That's a big thing for me, because I find it hard to express my feelings. I'm learning a lot about communication and letting things out instead of holding things in.

I think that I'm also more focused on community, and to me, community is very important. People think I'm an extrovert, but really, I'm an introvert, and because of the things I've experienced, it takes a lot for me to trust. So, I'm learning to trust and that's a big thing with Linker, that I'm learning to say how I feel and to trust that it's safe for me to be able to express that.

I wouldn't be where I am now if it wasn't for the Linker Service. I've had to navigate Aged Care and Centrelink on my own before and they're very difficult areas to get any help.

There is such a need for this sort of service, and I can think of so many people who need it. I think it's great. I think it's fantastic. And that's why I'm very positive. Because, you know, there's a real gap, a huge gap, in areas where women need help, domestic violence, financial, all the grief and trauma and everything. The Linker Service fills in the gaps. It just means the world to me – it's helped me so much.

I just feel like I've really blossomed like a flower. I'm just amazed at how many things are happening in my life, and I appreciate it."

CL's experience of the Linker Service

"I'm a single grandmother raising two grandchildren. I also have a brain injury and osteoarthritis. I've been in my full-time care role for six years, but it wasn't until the Linker Service that I really received any help.

It's been absolutely amazing and has helped with so many things. Like my grandson, he's very much into his sports but there is a great deal of expense that comes with that, and I was able to be linked to Variety and they gave him a scholarship. I've also had help with my car and help cancelling services.

You know, you just sit there and talk to your Linker about your worries, and they come back with information about different services and it makes our lives so much better. The help has been beyond any expectation. It's just been amazing.

My Linker has been such a beautiful soul, so caring, soft, nurturing and has always made me feel comfortable. It's been so nice to feel like a somebody rather than a number or a nobody.

She said to me, 'So you're making sure the grandchildren are okay, but what about you?' She has connected me to health programs and a nutrition counsellor and I am meeting my health goals and life goals for both myself and the children. We're in a much happier, healthier space.

I feel much more comfortable reaching out for help now.

'Knowing that I will be greeted with respect, is just a whole different feeling, and that's given me a lot more confidence to ask for help when I need it.'

It's given me confidence and made me feel, you know, sort of worthy of myself. I think it's important to share these things so other people can trust, trust in processes too."

AK's experience of the Linker Service

"I have become aware of how important it is for me to have a Linker 'touchpoint', especially during times when I feel overwhelmed or unsure about how to approach things.

When I became unwell, my capacity slowed significantly. Having someone there to support me, remind me of my strengths, and help break things down into manageable steps reduced a great deal of stress. This assisted in bringing me harmony and a balance and remind me that 'things are not too bad, and I can do this.

Throughout my breast cancer treatment, staying connected to the Linker Network as a Lived Experience consultant, helped me feel connected and not alone. The flexibility I was given and the dignity that I have always felt, kept me grounded and reminded me that I was competent and had valuable insight to offer, even in my changing circumstances. This work gave me confidence.

I now notice how beneficial it is to be able to return to my Linker, even after time has passed. It is reassuring not having to repeat myself and knowing that my Linker understands me and the challenges I face.

'This ongoing connection has helped me feel relaxed and that it is okay not to be in a 'perfect space'.'

In fact, the entire service, is not only a human resource of knowledge that gets better with time but also helps increase the feeling of safety and that it doesn't matter if I don't have it 'all together', which has helped remove shame and stigma, and the power dynamic, and I can say I don't feel this way about any other service.

As soon as I was finished with my treatment, I gained paid employment in an exciting new role as a Project Officer who will now manage a co-design process with other women with Lived Experience. This has come full circle, and I can't wait to apply what I've learned and hope to make the women involved feel as confident and worthy as this experience and process has made me.

My Linker: I have watched this beautiful person, who is so respectful, giving, eager in to developing skills and in learning. In the beginning we would investigate and think things through together (my Linker more so), and now I notice what an expert she has become in her role and her incredible expertise.

Her experience has enhanced her knowledge around things, and she now knows the best contacts in a wide range of services. I feel proud of how much my Linker has developed in her role, and I am also proud of myself for having been part of the foundations that helped shape this service.

My Linker's motivation, authenticity, curiosity and wanting the best outcomes for her clients is obvious. This, coupled with her goodness, makes her a miracle in my eyes.

I wanted to share this feedback, to not only to acknowledge my Linker and the wider Linker Network but also to Wyatt for truly giving back to South Australians. Together, we have done a really great job."

Deval Shah, Linker UCWB

“I describe my role as a Linker as being like a catalyst, linking clients with the experts and services they need, or are ready for, based on what they are experiencing at that moment. A lot of our clients are socially isolated and not aware of the supports that are out there.

Sometimes it takes time, particularly if a client is still in contemplation mode and not quite ready to reach out and access a service. Sitting in that grey space with them is part of the beauty of the Linker Service.

Sometimes clients have not had good experiences with other services in the past, and for a lot of our clients, keeping up with different services is like a part-time job with multiple appointments a day, things like legal appointments, financial counselling and medical appointments. So sometimes it's just way too much and can be quite overwhelming.

The Linker Service is completely client-centred, there is no pressure, we are meeting our clients where they are. In those cases, it's very gratifying as the relationship develops and trust is built, and the client sees that they'll be heard, understood and provided with guidance or support that is relevant to what they're going through.

There's strong camaraderie among the Linkers - we all have different expertise and we collaborate and help each other navigate different parts of the system. For instance, some Linkers have lots of experience navigating domestic violence and others are very skilled at financial capability work.

‘We might be based at different organisations, but it feels like we’re all on the same team.’

And the community of practice is literally communities of practice. We're reflective and focused on improving our professional practice.

I've seen some very significant changes for clients through the Linker Service. One of my clients has been involved with Linker since the very beginning when she helped with the co-design of the service. She has three kids and is a survivor of domestic violence. She is on Centrelink and with her youngest child about to start school, she wanted to prepare to re-enter the workforce. She had worked at a high-level of project management in the past, but after all the support she herself received in recent years, she decided to pivot and go into community services as a way of giving back.

She came to me saying, ‘I don't know where to start. All I know is I want to do something in community services, and I want to build my career there.’

So, we started brainstorming about different courses, fee-free TAFE courses and reaching out to a TAFE mentor to help find the right courses and even doing some volunteering to build connections. We also spoke about no interest loan volunteers and looked into Parent Pathways which supports

parents with kids under 6 who are transitioning back into work. We knew her organisational skills, resourcefulness and interpersonal skills were all there which was a great start.

She is now studying at TAFE and really enjoying it. She also completed training as a no interest loan volunteer with a local organisation which has also offered her additional opportunities to volunteer in emergency assistance to build new skills. They've encouraged her to consider pursuing financial counselling too which is just a couple of different study credits. She has been supported by Parent Pathways which has paid for the technology that she needs for study and for petrol. She has also completed the orientation training to be involved in the Linker intake program.

We walk alongside our clients as Linkers - we are there. Small actions can have a big ripple effect on wellbeing and I want my clients to have peace of mind. I want them to have the right supports so they can get out of the stress of managing so much alone and get to a phase where they're not just surviving but thriving."