

Maddie

A career that gives back: Maddie's journey from hospitality to helping others thrive

For Maddie Hartridge, a 10-minute conversation is never “just” a phone call. It’s a vital connection that has the power to change a client’s day, or even their life. As a Customer Support Advisor at ECH, she links older South Australians with allied health services such as physiotherapy, podiatry and even garden therapy. Trading a 10-year career in hospitality for a path of new opportunities at ECH, Maddie’s compassion and problem-solving skills help our clients live life to the fullest.

A new chapter in care

For a client recovering from a fall or returning home from a hospital stay, Maddie is a warm, reassuring voice on the other end of the phone. She understands that behind every call is an older South Australian looking for a

bit of stability, and she takes pride in linking them with the allied health services they need to feel safe, confident and at ease again.

Maddie developed her gift for connecting with people during 10 years of customer service and hospitality management. Yet, she felt a pull towards a more meaningful direction – a role where her skills could directly contribute to someone’s wellbeing.

After discovering ECH through a friend, Maddie joined our team as a Scheduler. Although she was new to the world of aged care, she brought a can-do attitude and a genuine desire to help.

“I’m the kind of person who likes to jump in and get things done. If I’m not sure of something, I’ll ask, and if I’m ready for a new challenge, I’ll put my hand up,” Maddie says.

Maddie’s journey at ECH began in Home Services, but her proactive nature soon led her to the Allied Health team. Now, as a Customer Support Advisor, she plays a vital role in ensuring clients have access to the

specialist care that helps them stay safe, happy and independent at home.

“What’s five or 10 minutes out of my day might make a client’s entire day,” Maddie explains. “Some of these clients don’t have any family members nearby and just have us on the end of the phone. They’re so grateful for our help. I really enjoy what I do - it’s fulfilling to help clients achieve their goals.”



Working together for every client

In her day-to-day role, Maddie acts as a vital link between clients, their families and ECH's allied health professionals. While many people think of allied health as just physiotherapy or podiatry, Maddie and her team coordinate appointments for dietetics, occupational therapy, music therapy and even garden therapy.

"I've learned so much about the different ways we can support people," Maddie says. "For example, our horticultural therapist is brilliant. I never even knew garden therapy existed. But I've learned how pulling weeds and getting people outside in a garden helps with their mobility and flexibility, as well as their mental health."

Maddie also serves as a supportive "middle point" for managers and care partners. She steps in to resolve issues for high-risk clients - such as those recovering from a fall or a hospital stay - aiming to fix problems before they need further intervention. It's a big job, but she never does it alone.

"I've got a great team. We work cohesively together, and if someone is struggling with a lot of emails or a growing referral queue, we all jump in and help. It's a very collaborative and positive space where we always look out for each other."

Support that goes both ways

While Maddie is focused on helping clients, she has found that ECH is just as committed to helping her get more out of life. Coming from the high-pressure world of hospitality, she has been heartened by the genuine friendships and rapport she has built with colleagues and clients alike.

"I've gained lifelong friends here. My managers are so supportive. I have the flexibility to blend working in the office with working from home, and if I need to leave a little early for an appointment, it's never an issue."

That balance allows Maddie to recharge at the gym and spend time with her eight-year-old West Highland Terrier, Ollie. Reflecting on her time at ECH, Maddie says the biggest change has been her own confidence.

"I actually used to be terrified about calling clients," Maddie admits. "But now, it's no problem at all. I'm a lot more confident in my voice and myself."

Maddie's message for anyone looking to make a real difference at ECH is to simply go for it.

"Don't be afraid to put your hand up. At ECH, it's not always about having the right skillset; it's about finding the right person. If you have a positive mindset, if you're motivated to help and willing to learn, the opportunities are there."

