



# REVIEW

BY MONICA SCANLON

*Fraying: Mum, Memory Loss, the Medical Maze and Me* will resonate with many in the community facing the challenges of caring for someone who has Alzheimer's disease. Michele Gierck pieced together warning signs that could no longer be dismissed as her elderly mum 'just forgetting'. It became reality that her mum was 'losing the edge'. Michele's diary entries commenced in 2009 in Melbourne and recorded her navigation of an unknown path.

In her personal retelling, Michele recounts the challenges of being the primary carer and advocate for her 88 year-old mother. This involved observing, decision-making and having to take charge. In order to meet her mum's needs, Michele found herself on a merry-go-round of paperwork, phone calls, appointments, meetings with medical teams and discussions on alternative living arrangement options.

All the time Michele dealt with the medical maze, she attempted to maintain the normality of life. The demands of caring for her elderly mum placed pressure on Michele and at times she was overcome with guilt for carrying on with her life. Michele faced many frustrations such as her mother confusing appointment times, complications when she didn't accompany her mum to appointments and her mum forgetting to pay bills or forgetting to eat.

This honest and candid book is written with love, wisdom and at times humour. The book concludes with a chapter on reflections and resources including "What I'd have done differently", "What I wouldn't change", "Conversations worth having" and "Resources", and is invaluable for anyone caring for someone who is elderly and/or has memory loss. **A2**

Michele Gierck *Fraying: Mum, Memory Loss, the Medical Maze and Me*, NewSouth Publishing 2015. This book is available for loan from the Resource Centre, 137 Broadmeadow Road, Broadmeadow. E [resourcecentre@mn.catholic.edu.au](mailto:resourcecentre@mn.catholic.edu.au). or P 4902 9100 or view the online catalogue at [mn.catholic.edu.au](http://mn.catholic.edu.au).

