



## Caring for Carers

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## Carers NSW

Carers NSW is the peak organisation for 849, 700 people of all ages providing care for family members or friends with a disability, mental illness, drug and alcohol dependencies, chronic condition or who are frail in NSW



## Profile of Carers (ABS 2009)

- 771,400 primary carers in Australia
- 2,632,000 people are carers or 12.2% of the Australian population
- Most primary carers are female (68%)
- 35% of primary carers spend 40 hours of more caring a week
- Over 30% of carers have been caring for more than 10 years



## Why do carers care?

- Family responsibility
  - 66.9% of carers caring for a child did so out of a sense of family responsibility
- Can provide better care
- Emotional obligation



## Carers' wellbeing

- The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index found that carers have the lowest collective wellbeing of any group
- Carers have an average rating on the depression scale that is classified as moderate depression
- Recent research also reveal carers have lower wellbeing, including mental wellbeing



## The impact of caring

It can be difficult for many carers to think about the impact of caring:

- They may have been caring for some time
- They may feel worn out emotionally
- They may feel exhausted physically
- They may not be able to take breaks
- They may be consumed with worry for the person they care for
- They may have increased expenses related to caring, and reduced income



## Positive aspects of caring

- Satisfaction of learning new skills
- Love and commitment
- Positive impact on relationships
- Relief



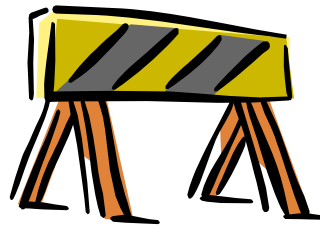
## For parents

- Parents often have the prime responsibility to investigate their child's condition and learn how to manage
- It can be a juggling act and can impact on family life and relationships



## What are the barriers to self-care?

- Guilt
- Grief
- Expectations
- Multiple responsibilities
- Perceived lack of opportunity
- Sense of duty or responsibility
- Beliefs and values about caring



## Do this quick check

### How long is it since...

- you went to the doctor for you?
- you had a general health check up?
- you spoke in some detail to a doctor about being a carer and what it involves?
- you last had a *refreshing* break?
- you had a good night sleep?
- you did something just for you?
- you had fun?

### How often do you...

- feel tired most of the time?
- feel exhausted?
- eat regularly?
- have trouble concentrating?
- feel frustrated, lonely or helpless?
- feel as though you aren't coping, or won't be able to cope?
- feel irritable or angry, especially over things that, at other times, you would find quite insignificant?

## Looking after you: Strategies



### Getting Out

Try to continue with activities you enjoy

### Keep Healthy

Regular exercise, meals, and sleep



### Planning to look after yourself

Make time for yourself, plan ahead and pace yourself

### Planning for the future

Organise ahead of time, make plans for when crisis occurs





Know that you are not alone

Reduce feelings of isolation

Asking family, friends or neighbours to give you a hand

Plan how you will let them know



Take a break  
e.g. respite

Practise relaxation  
e.g. breathing techniques, yoga, listening to music



## Services for carers

- Carer Line
- National Carer Counselling Program
- Young Carers Program
- Carer Life Course e-tool



## Carer Line: 1800 242 636

Provides carers with referral to services and tailored information and resources to support carers in their caring role

- Referrals to community and government services
- Practical written information
- Emotional support
- Referrals to specialist programs within Carers NSW, including counselling services



## National Carer Counselling Program (NCCP)

Counselling can assist the carer with:

- Managing stress, anxiety or depression
- Learning new skills
- Practical problem solving techniques
- Dealing with grief and loss
- Emotional support
- Enhancing health and wellbeing



## Young Carers Program

For carers 25 years old or younger

Aims:

- Promote issues and needs of YC
- Develop a YC support network
- Coordinate YC activities
- Support referrals to local services
- Resource distribution



## Carer Life Course

[www.carerlifecourse.com.au](http://www.carerlifecourse.com.au)

- Phase 1: Suspicion that something is wrong
- Phase 2: Confirmation of illness or condition
- Phase 3: Adjusting
- Phase 4: Managing
- Phase 5: Purposeful Coping
- Phase 6: End of active caring role



## Key Contacts:

- Carers NSW Carer Line  
1800 242 636 Mon–Fri 9am–5pm
- Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre  
1800 052 222 24 hours, 7 days
- Lifeline 13 11 14 24 hours, 7 days
- Kids Helpline 1800 551 800 24 hours, 7 days
- Mens Line 1300 789 978 24 hours, 7 days
- Parent Line 1300 130 052 24 hours, 7 days



## Carers NSW

Carers NSW

Head Office

Ph: (02) 9280 4744

[www.carersnsw.asn.au](http://www.carersnsw.asn.au)

[www.youngcarersnsw.asn.au](http://www.youngcarersnsw.asn.au)

[www.carerlifecourse.com.au](http://www.carerlifecourse.com.au)

