

Are you an exhausted Carer?

The greatest gift you can give to the person you're caring for is the gift of your own physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

If you're caring for someone with a chronic illness, disability, mental illness or who is frail aged then you need to care for you first.

If you make time for YOU first, you'll have boundless energy left over to care for others. Remember, you'll never FIND the time. You need to MAKE the time because caring for the carer is vital!

Keep healthy and active

- Exercise regularly – 20 minutes daily will help you sustain the physical demands of caring and provide a break from your daily activities.
- Eat regular, healthy meals – to fuel the strength and stamina you need for caring.
- Get enough sleep – tiredness and exhaustion increase the stress of caring.
- Look after your back – if you need to lift the person you're caring for, get professional advice on the safest way to do so. Is there equipment that can help?
- Talk to your GP about your caring role and the demands it makes on you.

Practice relaxation

Make time to relax. Do these activities while practicing being present:

- Breathe in to the count of 4. Hold for the count of 4. Breathe out to the count of 4.
- Take a walk.
- Meditate or practice Coming to Your Senses.
- Do some gentle stretches.
- Listen to music with eyes closed.
- Mindful colouring in.

Take time out

Continue with activities you enjoy. Make time to follow your interests outside your caring role.

Take a break (respite)

Respite is a break from the responsibility of looking after someone. It may be for a few hours, a day, a night or longer. Respite is a way of relieving the stress of being a carer.

Stay connected

It's easy to become isolated as a carer. You might be too busy to keep up with friends and family. People may visit you less often. Loneliness can be a serious side effect of being a carer. Talking to someone who understands can be a relief. Sharing your experiences with someone you trust – family, friends, neighbours, other carers or workers – can help. Support groups offer a safe place to talk about your role as a carer. Being in touch with other carers experiencing similar things to you allows you to share stories and support each other.

Get Help

If you're fretting about the future, for yourself or the people you care for, feel stuck, tired or experience conflict on a daily basis call the Carer Support Line on **1800 242 636** or the Quest for Life Centre on **1300 941 488**.

