

02 GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

People will generally have a different set of knowledge, skills and experiences to guide them through life. Some of the information listed here may be of benefit to you in your role as a carer. Click on the topic below to go straight to the page.

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Disclaimer:

This module is designed to provide entry level content and more complex care/caring needs or specific issues should be addressed by a health professional.



Clicking on this home button will bring you back to this page

THE ROLE OF CARER GATEWAY

WHAT

Carer Gateway is a national support service funded by the Australian Government. It offers tailored supports and services to help you manage challenges, reduce stress and plan ahead.

The website and phone service provides practical information, advice, access to services and support, counselling, coaching and links to other carers.

WHO

Carer Gateway is for anyone who is a carer. You may care for someone with a disability, medical condition, mental illness or frailty.

Watch the videos to learn more about the many ways people provide care and support.

WHERE

Call Carer Gateway on **1800 422 737** weekdays from 8am till 5pm to discuss your personal circumstances.

For emergency respite, you can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; they will connect you with the regional service delivery provider.

Watch video to meet some people who provide care.



SERVICES THAT MAY HELP



Practical
information and
advice



Connect with
other carers



Respite,
including
emergencies



Counselling



Self-guided
coaching



Financial
assistance



Emergency
planning



Skills courses



Carer directed
packages



EXAMPLES OF HOW THE CARER GATEWAY CAN HELP



1. Arranging emergency respite because you need to go to hospital and the person you care for cannot be left alone.



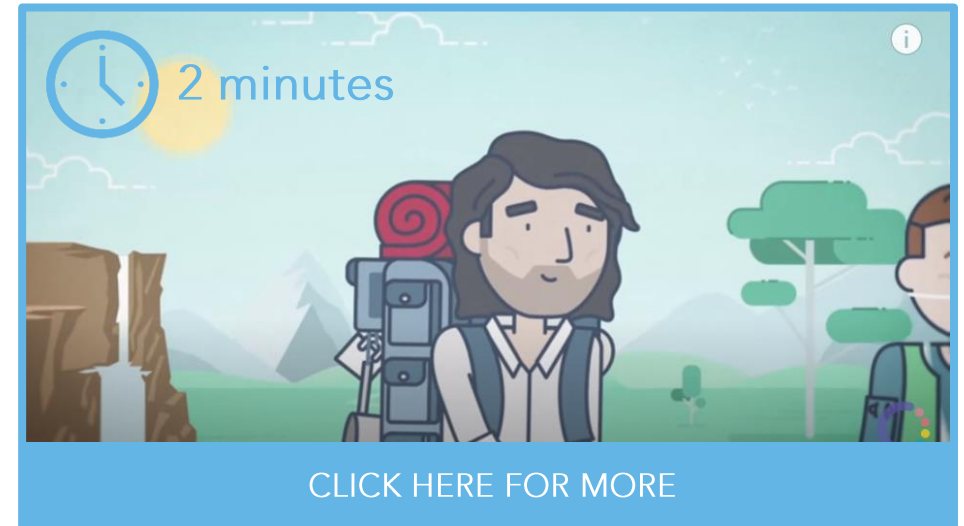
2. Finding out ways you can connect with other carers who you can talk to about your experiences.



3. Asking about financial assistance so you can study or return to work.



4. Arranging a free counselling service to help you juggle the demands of being a carer.



Why taking a break is so important – watch here



THE ROLE OF MY AGED CARE

WHAT

My Aged Care is a national support service funded by the Australian Government. It is the starting point to getting help at home for an older person.

Each person undergoes a registration, screening and assessment process to understand their specific needs.

WHY

Arranging services can be complex and daunting. My Aged Care is there to help you through this one step at a time.

WHEN

Contact My Aged Care when you first need help. Keep them updated with any changes.

WHERE

Call weekdays 8am till 8pm, or Saturday 10am till 2pm on **1800 200 422** or visit the website www.myagedcare.gov.au/

Watch how My Aged Care can help here:



Read more about speaking for an older person (being a representative) here www.myagedcare.gov.au/appointing-representative

SERVICES THAT MAY HELP



Personal care



Social support



Respite care



Home maintenance



Shopping or meal preparation



Domestic assistance



Home Care Package
1,2,3,4



Nursing care or
allied health services



Admission to a
nursing home



TIP: There are a range of services and supports available. Eligibility and fees may apply. It is best to speak directly with My Aged Care.

EXAMPLES OF HOW MY AGED CARE CAN HELP



Arranging the Aged Care Assessment Team to assess the needs of the person you care for



Finding someone to help with housework and lawn mowing



Arranging a care worker to visit weekly or fortnightly so you can have regular respite



Helping you access a home care package if you are caring for someone with complex needs



Watch the end to end process for getting a service for an older person here



Translation and Interpreting Service 131 450 | My Aged Care 1800 200 422

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

WHAT

As a carer, you make a valuable contribution to the community and to the person you care for.

In recognition of this, carers are supported by the Carer Recognition Act 2010.

WHY

Sometimes carers struggle to be recognised and be involved in important decisions. You may have trouble getting time off work to attend to caring duties. You may need to advocate for the person you support when their needs are not being met.

WHEN

As a carer it is important to know your rights and for you to be included in conversations and decisions about the person you care for.

WHERE

The NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 recognises the need to consider the views and needs of carers. Read more here www.carersnsw.org.au/facts/carers-recognition-act/

EXAMPLES OF YOUR RIGHTS



To be treated with dignity and respect



To privacy and confidentiality



To be recognised as a partner in care



To make a complaint without fear of retribution



To work and be supported by your employer



To be included in decisions



SPEAKING UP FOR YOURSELF

WHAT

One of the roles of a carer is to speak up for someone who may not be able to speak for themselves, or who may need help to get the services and support they need. It is also important you and the person you care for are treated fairly and with respect.

WHY

Carers often feel the service system is a maze, that some professionals work against them, and they have to battle for every tiny gain. Learning to speak up, raise issues and work together will achieve better outcomes for you and the person you support.

WHEN

Carers should be respected as partners in care by professionals and service providers.

WHERE

Carer Gateway has good tips on advocacy here:
www.carergateway.gov.au/help-advice/speaking

Seniors Rights Service can help with independent aged care advocacy. Call **1800 424 079** or read more here:
<https://seniorsrightsservice.org.au/what-we-do/aged-care-advocacy/>

HOW TO SPEAK UP

1. If the first person or organisation you approach cannot help, ask them for advice about where to go next
2. Know your rights and responsibilities as a carer. See [page 7](#)
3. Know what you want to achieve and be clear and open about your ideal outcome
4. Consider what you are trying to achieve and where you might accept compromise
5. Keep records of your conversations - always ask for important decisions and information to be confirmed in writing
6. Once you have reached agreement on what will be done, negotiate a reasonable timetable



THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPLAINTS

WHAT

If you have a concern about the care you or someone else is receiving, or the way you are being treated, it is important that you talk about it.

WHY

Complaints are important because they can help health professionals and service providers improve the quality of care and services they provide.

WHEN

If you feel comfortable, you should express your concerns to the person involved as soon as practical. All service providers will have a complaints system in place to investigate and address any concerns.

WHERE

Always try to resolve your issue directly with the service provider.

If you are not comfortable raising your concerns, you can ask a friend or family member to advocate on your behalf.

You can address your concerns with My Aged Care. Call 1800 200 422 or visit: <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/contact-us/complaints>

If you're not satisfied with the response, you can escalate your concerns to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission on **1800 951 822**.

HOW TO COMPLAIN

1. Talk about your concerns with the person you care for and let them know what you are planning to do
2. Take time to consider how you will explain the problem, express your feelings and ask for action
3. Raise your complaint directly with the person involved – stay calm, polite and use respectful language
4. If you're not satisfied with their response, ask to speak to their manager
5. If you need help with your complaint, you can ask a friend to speak on your behalf
5. If you wish for a professional advocacy service, contact the Seniors Rights Service See [page 8](#)
7. If you are not happy with the service provider's response, contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission



WHY PLANNING IS IMPORTANT

WHAT

It can be hard to find time to plan ahead for emergencies or the future.

Planning ahead is thinking about the finances, lifestyle or health care needs of you and the person you care for.

It is also having discussions about the future and having documents in place to help.

WHY

Things are likely to change over time. The person you are caring for may need more care, or you might not be able to keep caring for them.

WHEN

It is never too early to plan ahead. Have the discussions when things are stable and have the documents in place before they are needed.

WHERE

Visit Planning Ahead website <https://planningaheadtools.com.au/> or call **1300 887 529** to discuss your personal circumstances.



[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

HOW TO PLAN AHEAD

1. Find a quiet time and place to talk to the person you are caring for about what they want in the future
2. Think about the care and support they need and where they wish to live – home, retirement village, nursing home
3. Consider who can help and what help is needed in the event of an emergency – family, friends, doctor, health care team, Carer Gateway, My Aged Care, service providers
4. Think about end of life or when the caring responsibility may become too much for you
5. Consider what documents are needed and who can assist with these – doctor, lawyer, financial planner
6. See more detail on documentation in the coming pages



EXAMPLES OF PLANNING AHEAD



Talk to the person you care for about you both having a will. Read more here: www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/publications/factsheets-and-resources/why-make-a-will



Appointing a power of attorney to manage your / their financial matters. See [page 12.](#)



Appointing a guardian to manage any health or lifestyle decisions if you or the person you care for are unable to. See [page 13.](#)



Having an emergency care plan in place should you be unable to continue your caring role due to sickness or injury. See [page 14.](#)



Having an advance care plan to document the person's wishes about future medical treatment and care should they become unable to communicate. See [page 16.](#)



Listen to the benefits of having My Health Record here



TIP: Don't forget these documents need to be updated should your circumstances change.

THE ROLE OF A POWER OF ATTORNEY

WHAT

A power of attorney (POA) is a legal document that you can use to appoint someone to act on your behalf for property and financial matters.

A general POA is usually given for a specific period of time e.g. you may plan to travel overseas or go to hospital. It stops when you lose the ability to make decisions (lose capacity).

An enduring POA will continue even after you have lost the capacity to make decisions.

WHO

The person you choose (your attorney) can be a lawyer, solicitor, family member, friend or NSW Trustee and Guardian.

WHEN

A power of attorney can only be used for financial decisions. This may include dealing with bank accounts, transferring money, paying bills, dealing with shares or buying and selling property.

WHERE

A solicitor or NSW Trustee and Guardian can prepare a POA for you. Or you can use a form available from NCAT, Land and Property Information, legal stationers or some newsagents.

The form for an enduring POA is different to the one for a general POA. Read more [HERE](#).

HOW A POWER OF ATTORNEY CAN BE USED

You decide how much power or authority to give your attorney. You may want them to have the same powers you would have with your money or property. You may want to limit their powers to very specific tasks e.g. paying certain bills or selling your house.



Signing rental agreements



Manage your bank account



Signing service agreements



Selling property



Voting at meetings

NOTE: If you (or the person you support) have lost capacity and do not have an enduring power of attorney there will be nobody with legal authority to make decisions about your property and finances.



THE ROLE OF AN ENDURING GUARDIAN

WHAT

An enduring guardian (ED) is someone appointed to make medical and lifestyle decisions for you if you can no longer make your own (lose capacity).

You can appoint an ED to make decisions about where you live, your doctor, medical and dental care and services you receive.

WHO

Choose someone you trust to make decisions in your best interests. They must be over 18 and be willing to take on the role. You can decide what powers, or functions, you want to give them. Simply complete an 'appointment of enduring guardian' form.

WHEN

The appointment only starts if you are unable to make your own personal or lifestyle decisions. Your ED may wish to seek the opinion of a doctor about your capacity before acting on your behalf.

WHERE

Read more about enduring guardianship here:
www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/publications/factsheets-and-resources/speaking-for-myself/appointing-an-enduring-guardian

HOW AN ENDURING GUARDIAN CAN BE USED

An enduring guardian can make health and lifestyle decisions for a person who no longer has capacity to do so. If you appoint more than one person, you can appoint them so they can only make decisions together (jointly) or individually (severally).



Where to live, such as moving into residential care



Which services the person has at home



What medical or dental care the person receives



2 minutes
an Enduring Guardian
makes decisions for you



CLICK HERE FOR MORE

Watch NSW government explanation here



THE BENEFITS OF AN EMERGENCY CARE PLAN

WHAT

An emergency care plan has all the information about the person you care for in one place, so you can get it quickly and easily. It is also helpful to create a carer emergency card to carry in your wallet. This lets people know that you care for someone in the event you are unwell and unable to communicate.

WHY

When you care for somebody who depends on you, putting your life on hold while you deal with sudden illness, accidents, family troubles or emergencies may be challenging.

Having a plan makes it easy for someone to take over from you in a hurry.



WHEN

Emergencies can happen anytime. It is a good idea to start today.

WHERE

Hear about the benefits of an emergency care plan:



CLICK HERE FOR MORE

Download a blank emergency care plan and card here:
www.carergateway.gov.au/help-advice/planning

HOW TO CREATE A PLAN

1. Talk to the person you care for about the importance of a plan. Include them in the planning where possible.
2. Think about the best people to stand in for your caring responsibilities. Check they are willing to be an emergency contact.
3. Be sure the person/s chosen accepts the level of commitment and knows exactly what is expected of them.
4. Fill in the Emergency Care Plan. Check the details are correct; ask the person's Doctor, pharmacist, service provider/s.
5. Give a copy of your plan to each of your emergency contacts. Go through it with them and make sure they understand what is required.
6. Keep the original in a safe but visible place, like the top of the fridge. Let people know where. Add plan to your My Health Record if you have one.
7. Update your plan every year or sooner if there are significant changes to your caring situation, the person's needs, or the emergency contacts.

THINGS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR EMERGENCY CARE PLAN

Here is the type of information that is included in an Emergency Care Plan. Remember to update the plan when the person's needs change, the emergency contacts change or your caring circumstances change.



1. Step by step instructions on how to care for the person



2. The person's medical history, medications, whether they have My Health Record



3. Contact details of family and friends who can step into your shoes if needed



4. The person's Doctor, pharmacist and other health professionals contact details



8. Consider packing a bag of essential items that person may need in an emergency



7. Whether the person has an advance care plan or advance care directive and where it is located



6. The permissions people have to make decisions on the person's behalf



5. Service provider/s details, what they do, how they can assist and how to contact them



TIP: Talk to your doctor about the benefits of My Health Record. Watch video www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=72&v=eZfkMm8bRKw&feature=emb_logo

WHAT IS ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

WHAT

Advance Care Planning helps you plan for future medical care. It involves thinking about your values, beliefs and wishes and the medical care you would like to have if you cannot make your own decisions.

An advance care directive is a written record of your wishes as well as instructions about future medical treatment.

WHY

It is a good idea to discuss your wishes with your doctor and people close to you. It helps if they know your wishes should they need to make decisions for you in the future.



WHEN

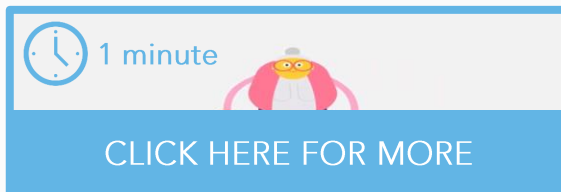
Advance care planning should be completed when you are healthy. It is best to make decisions before there is an urgent need or an emergency.

WHERE

Watch more about what you need to think about here:



Watch more about talking about your wishes here:



HOW ADVANCE CARE PLANNING AUSTRALIA CAN HELP

Advance Care Planning Australia is a national program that provides information, education and advice to individuals, carers and health professionals.

Call 1300 208 582 or visit www.advancecareplanning.org.au/for-family-friends-carers to learn more about the following:



When to talk about advance care planning



How to start the conversation



Making decisions for someone else



Help someone make an advance care directive



Find the forms for your state or territory



Real people's stories

SEEKING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

WHAT

The Australian Government provides payments to directly support carers. You may be eligible for government benefits and allowances to help you continue in your caring role and cover some of the extra costs associated with caring.

WHY

Caring can be costly. Financial pressure can cause a lot of stress and worry. Many carers find it difficult to remain in full and part time paid work.

WHEN

It's a good idea to know what services, payments and supports you may be eligible for. Learning ways to better manage finances can also reduce carer stress.

WHERE

There are many services that can help, including those listed on the right.

There are also a number of payments and supplements you may qualify for. See [page 18](#) for more details.

Watch how the Carer Gateway can provide information and support here



SERVICES THAT CAN HELP

Carer Gateway

Call **1800 422 737** to discuss your personal circumstances or read more here:

www.carergateway.gov.au/financial-help

Services NSW

For details on carer payments you may qualify for visit:

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/payments-carers#a1

National Debt Help Line

Call **1800 007 007** for financial counselling, information and advice or visit:

financialrights.org.au/about-us/national-debt-helpline/

Salvation Army

Call the emergency relief team on 1300 371 288. Visit here for free counselling and coaching:

www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/financial-assistance/



FINANCIAL PAYMENTS AND SUPPORT FOR CARERS

Caring can be costly. You may be eligible for payments and other financial support to help with your costs.

Carer Payment

This is income support if you cannot work because you care for someone.

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centralink/carers-payment



Carer Allowance

This is an income supplement for carers who provide daily care for an adult.

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centralink/carers-allowance



NSW Seniors Card

Join to receive discounts from everyday items, to furniture, insurance and unlimited travel in NSW for \$2.50 per day.

www.seniorscard.nsw.gov.au/gold-opal



Companion Card

Frail older people may apply for a card to allow their carer free entry to some venues and activities.

www.companioncard.gov.au/index.htm



Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Safety Net

If you spend a lot on medication, you may be able to get them cheaper or free.

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/pharmaceutical-benefits-scheme/when-you-spend-lot-pbs-medicines



OTHER SUPPLEMENTS YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR

There are other supplements you or the person you support may qualify for, depending on your personal circumstances:

Mobility Parking Scheme

If you're a carer for a person with a disability, you can apply for a permit on their behalf.

www.rms.nsw.gov.au/roads/using-roads/mobility-parking/permits/apply-for-permit.html



Running essential medical equipment

If you are paying for heating, cooling or certain equipment for medical needs.

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/essential-medical-equipment-payment



Appliance Replacement Offer

You may qualify for a 40-50% discount to upgrade your old fridge or TV. For pension concession card holders.

www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-appliance-replacement-offer



No or Low Interest Loan Schemes

Low income families can borrow up to \$1,500 for essential goods and service. See website for conditions.

www.moneysmart.gov.au/loans/no-or-low-interest-loans



Continence Aids Payment Scheme

An annual payment to help with the costs for products that help manage incontinence.

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/continence-aids-payment-scheme



DISCLAIMER

All of the content in this resource is for informational purposes only. It is not a substitute for advice provided by a doctor or other qualified health professional. The information in this resource is true and correct at time of publishing.

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