

# Caring for someone towards the end of life



## Young carers – looking after yourself

We all know we should take care of ourselves – eat well, sleep enough, exercise and have time for ourselves. However, when someone you care for is approaching the end of life, it's not so easy to do. This information is specifically for young carers, people aged 25 years or under, who provide care and support to a family member or friend.

### Why take care of yourself?

While all the attention is focused on the person who is unwell, it's easy to forget about your own needs. It's not selfish to take care of yourself. It's essential if you want to be able to care for another person. It will give you more strength to get through the tough times.

### So how do I do it?

Young carers have offered some suggestions on how to go about caring for yourself.

#### Keep up your fitness and social connections

- At first I stopped playing sport as I had no time. Friendships started to fade away as I didn't have time. What I learnt was that keeping up my health, fitness and friendships was important so I had to find a way to keep doing this
- You need to maintain connections with friends. I had to be organised to do this as it takes a lot more effort
- I was pushing people away. I had to learn to open up to my friends and family so that they understood what was going on
- Make sure you keep yourself healthy, mentally and physically.

## Don't expect too much of yourself

- I didn't know how to care for mum. I had never had to care for anyone else before. I tried to learn as much as I could from the care workers
- Let others help you. It's ok to not do everything
- Talking with the case manager was helpful. She helped us to understand what we needed to do for mum next.

## Take time out

- Take time each day to think about yourself and do things for yourself. This might be reading, sport, going for walks, listening to music or mindfulness meditation
- Sometimes I just have to take some time to do what's best for me.



## Talk to others

- I saw a psychologist regularly. I was able to vent my frustration and it helped to develop strategies to manage things
- It helps seeing a counsellor as I could vent with her and then not think too much about it
- I met other carers at Carers NSW. Knowing you are not alone and others are out there who understand really helps you care for yourself
- I attended a support group for carers.



## Embrace the good moments

This will be a sad time for you and your family. However it's important to spend quality time with the person you care for. Make time to talk with them and let them know how you feel about them. Create some good memories that will always be there. Keep a diary where you can write things down, do some drawings and maybe use some colour or add some photos. How about making it a scrapbook?

**Be kind to yourself. Don't judge yourself. There is no roadmap to being a good carer. Recognise that it will be hard. Talk to others, perhaps see a counsellor, so you have time to express how you really feel. This will clear your head space to let you spend quality time with the person you care for.**



## Further information and support

- **Carer Gateway** – provides access to information, counselling and support for carers – 1800 422 737 or [www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au)
- **Carers NSW** – provides information and support to carers – [www.carersnsw.org.au](http://www.carersnsw.org.au)
- **Kids Helpline** – free phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 – 1800 551 800 or [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)
- Talk to your **doctor**

