



Are you sexuality or gender diverse and caring for someone?

Carers provide care and support to a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness, drug and/or alcohol dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail.

They can find themselves providing emotional and practical support for that person. They may do this without realising that they are acting in the role of 'carer'. They may not realise that, as carers, there is specialist support available for them.

Anyone in life can find themselves in the role of a carer. Some research indicates that people who identify as sexuality or gender diverse are more likely to take on a caring role, and that they may take on caring responsibilities earlier in life than other carers who do not identify.

One carer that we spoke with explained:

"I haven't come out to my family, so they don't know that I have a partner. To them I am young and single ... they expect me to be more available. I feel like that is why I have taken the brunt of the caring role."

Primary carer for her grandfather who has dementia.

'Hidden' sexuality and gender diverse carers

Sexuality and gender diverse carers are less likely to come forward to access support for themselves in their caring role. They are more likely to be 'hidden carers'.

"I just do everything myself, I avoid services, not even for cleaning. It is already so stressful, I just don't have the mental capacity to deal with other people's dodgy attitudes around my identity or my partner's identity, or our relationships."

Carer for a partner who has a physical disability.

Carers NSW is looking at ways to address this issue, to find ways to engage with, and support, a greater number of sexuality and gender diverse carers.

To do this we spoke to carers about their experiences.

We hope that by sharing some of their stories we can encourage other sexuality and gender diverse carers to come forward to access the support they need to sustain them in their caring journey.

This information series covers the following topics:

- Some common experiences for sexuality and gender diverse carers
- A more inclusive approach in service settings
- Young carers who identify as sexuality and gender diverse
- Coming out as a young carer
- Navigating the aged care system as a sexuality and gender diverse carer
- Referral information for sexuality and gender diverse carers.

Support for carers

The stories we collected highlight only some of the diversity that exists among sexuality and gender diverse carers. We hope that we can encourage other sexuality and gender diverse carers to come forward for support in their caring journey.

Carers NSW is committed to the recognition and support of these hidden carers and to all carers, providing high quality information that is accessible, meaningful and inclusive to diverse groups of carers.

We would like to acknowledge everyone who has participated in this project, who have generously shared their experiences in order to assist others.

References:

Carers NSW 2020 Carer Survey.



Carers can benefit from professional assistance, one-to-one counselling and attending peer support groups.

More information is available through Carers NSW www.carersnsw.org.au and Carer Gateway www.carergateway.gov.au or call 1800 422 737

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