WHERE CAN I FIND SUPPORT SERVICES?

Carer Gateway
A national online and phone service which can help connect you to your local carer support services.
1800 422 737 or www.carergateway.gov.au

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres
Provide free and confidential information on local carer support and respite options.

Carers Australia
First point of contact for information, emotional support, planning and referrals. 1800 242 636 or www.carersaustralia.com.au

My Aged Care
The national contact centre for older people, their families and carers. Find information about different aged care services, your eligibility for services, local services in your area, and costs.
1800 200 422 or www.myagedcare.gov.au

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
A new scheme to support people living with permanent and significant disability, their families and carers.
1800 800 110 or www.ndis.gov.au

Centrelink
You may qualify for support payments if you provide constant care in the home for someone with a severe disability, medical condition, or who is frail aged for at least 6 months. Please note that payments are means-tested. Please apply online, visit your local Centrelink office or call 13 27 17, www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/carers

Your local Migrant Resource Centre
Support for elderly people, people living with a disability or mental or chronic illness, and their families. Some centres offer assessment services for home help and aged care support.

Your local Council or Shire
Contact them for carer support, respite care, home help, group activities and assessment for Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and aged care support.

Action for Disability in Ethnic Communities (ADEC)
A community based organisation for people of non-English speaking backgrounds living with a disability, their carers and their families. (03) 9480 7000, 1800 626 078 or www.adec.org.au/

Australian Multicultural Community Services
Services for older people and their carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
(03) 9689 9170 or www.amcservices.org.au/

Alzheimer’s Australia Victoria
A peak body providing advocacy and support for people living with dementia, and their families and carers.
1800 100 500 or www.fightdementia.org.au/

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WHO IS A CARER?

Do you help look after a family member, friend or neighbour who is elderly and frail, or living with an ongoing disability, physical illness, chronic illness or mental illness? If you do, you are a carer.

The word ‘carer’ can be confusing. Many carers do not use this word to describe themselves, and they might not realise that there is support for them.

Every caring situation is different. Carers can be looking after parents, spouses, in-laws, aunts or uncles, grandparents, children, neighbours or friends. They can come from any cultural background, and be of any age. They can be full time carers or part time carers, and be working or not working.

Updated February 2017. Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health

CARERS DO MANY THINGS, INCLUDING:

• Providing emotional support
• Help with mobility
• Help with eating, bathing and dressing
• Shopping, cooking, cleaning and gardening
• Managing money and paperwork
• Managing medicines
• Translating information and explaining services
• Medical appointments

Carers provide care during the day and overnight.
“We used to look after each other. But my husband’s condition has declined, and now I do everything.”

You can become a carer gradually as your family member’s conditions decline, or suddenly after an accident or diagnosis.

Caring for your family member can be deeply rewarding, but it also has emotional, physical, social and financial impacts. Sometimes when being a carer becomes the main part of your life, you can feel the impact on other parts of your life.

By seeking support to make time for other activities in your life, you are caring for yourself and becoming a stronger carer for your family member. There is help available if you would like to stay in school or work, or find new training or work opportunities. It is also important to make time for family, friends and hobbies that keep you healthy and happy.

It is important to seek support when:

• You feel isolated, lonely, or worried
• You feel tired, stressed or excessively busy
• Most of the responsibility of looking after your family member falls on you
• You would like more help
• Caring impacts on your work, social and personal life
• You don’t have time for regular breaks
• You would like to know more about available support services

What support services are available?

Depending on your needs, you or your family member can receive a range of support services including:

• Talking to other carers and learning from each other’s experiences (peer support)
• Somebody to talk to and plan with when the caring role is most stressful (counselling)
• Support with household chores and gardening
• Assessment for aged care services or disability services (in your own home or in a residential facility)
• Respite care

Respite means having a support person care for your family member at home or out of the home, so you can have a break. Respite can be for a few hours, a few days, or for a longer period.

By caring for yourself and taking breaks, you become stronger to care for your family member.

“I need help but what will my family think? Isn’t it my duty?”

“My family will understand once I explain my needs.”

“Even on a pension, we can access services.”

“I am already accessing GP services, I can ask them where to find more information.”

“Can we afford it?”

“How do I access support services?”

“I need help. Where do I get it?”

“I need help in looking after mum.”

“I can help you, and we will find other support services”