

Tips for Carers

- **Get involved** with the Carer Wellbeing Program offered by Far West Local Health District.
- It may be helpful to **talk** to your friends or family members about how you're feeling in your role as a supporter or carer. If you're having trouble coping and don't feel comfortable talking with the people who know, talk to a counsellor.
- You may find that your income from employment or government benefits won't allow for expenses that are not essential. Your **financial situation** could be causing you additional stress and pressure. It may be useful to speak to Centrelink or a financial counsellor as you may be eligible to receive a carers payment or other assistance.
- Many carers have found that **peer support** and support groups are valuable in reducing the feelings of isolation. It is important to have social time for your own mental health and wellbeing.
- Look after your **own health** as that is important too - talk to your GP or doctor.
- Take time to **relax and recharge** your batteries. You may like to try some yoga or learn some relaxation techniques as this can help to reduce stress levels and improve your quality of sleep.
- All forms of **exercise** offer health benefits. Everyday activities around the home, such as walking or gardening are good exercise. Benefits can be achieved from around 30 minutes per day. Having good physical fitness, strength and flexibility reduces the risk of physical injury and fatigue from the physical demands of caring.

Contact Us

Please contact us for support, referral or to find out more about our Carer and Family Wellbeing Program

For mental illness

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Are you providing support to someone with an illness ...

Family & Carer Supports Far West Local Health District



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Who Are Carers?

There are many people who provide support to someone with a mental illness, disability, chronic illness or who is frail and aged. They do this because they CARE about that person and what happens to them. People often fall into the role of CARER because it becomes a natural extension of their relationship with the person.

A **CARER** is someone who provides ongoing, unpaid support to another person. Anyone can be a **CARER**, including partners, parents, friends, siblings, neighbours and children.

Family and friends play an important role in caring for and supporting people living with an illness. They may offer practical assistance such as personal care, mobility, transport, communication, housework or emotional support.

Young people can be carers too. They may be providing extra support at home such as cooking, shopping, supervising brothers and sisters and helping with personal care. There are services available that can meet the special needs of young carers (up to age 25) and we can provide referral support to these services.

The Impact Of Caring

Caring can be a challenging experience that takes you along unexpected and unknown paths.

Trying to make sense of your feelings, the illness and the whole situation brings many questions, and sometimes, it seems, even fewer answers.

Some of the challenges carers can face may be:

- Financial hardship
- Feelings of isolation
- Difficulties participating in paid work or completing education
- Trouble maintaining their own health and wellbeing

It is important to understand your reactions are normal. They reflect how you feel and shouldn't be questioned or judged by other people who aren't walking in your shoes. Everyone's experiences are unique. However, it is good to find opportunities to share these feelings and gain support to help with the challenges.

Despite challenges caregiving can be a positive and life-enhancing role, so long as carers receive the information, support and advice they need.

What Can We Do?

Far West Local Health District provides a range of supports and services to families and carers including:

- Providing information, resources and advice.
- Linkages with and referrals to other support services, including respite and services for young carers.
- A carer wellbeing program with a focus on social and emotional wellbeing.
- Opportunities to socialise, take time and meet other carers, including a monthly morning tea.
- Support and advocacy to help navigate health services supplied by the Far West Local Health District.
- Information about services and programs that can meet your individual needs including e-technology and websites.
- Help you to be recognised, supported and included in the treatment and planning for your loved one.
- Using your feedback to help us provide better services and supports to families and carers.
- Opportunities to participate in planning and developing our health services.
- Information/education to service providers and community groups.