

Mental Health Awareness Week

9th-15th May 2022

Caring for your Mental Health

When caring for other people, either as a full time carer or as a care worker, it is easy to forget about your own wellbeing. Constantly focusing on the needs of others can often mean losing sight of your own needs and sooner or later this can lead to a problem with your mental health.

It is therefore important to show yourself some compassion and dedicate a little time in every day to yourself, time to chat with friends, time to do something that makes you smile, or simply time to relax and read a few pages of a book.



Doing this will not be easy as it will inevitably mean the person you are caring for having to take a back seat for a while, and for some people this may engender a feeling of guilt; but it's really important to remember that you matter just as much as the person you care for and it's OK to put yourself first from time to time- after all, you will be no help to your client or loved one if your mental health becomes impaired.

So what can you do to support yourself while caring for others - here are a few suggestions that might help:

- Book a time to call a friend or colleague - if you've made a commitment to have a chat with someone you are more likely to prioritise the time, rather than let it slip, and talking with friends helps to relieve the sense of loneliness and isolation that many carers can feel.
- Set a time to watch a favourite TV programme or read a few pages of a book - this sort of activity allows you to relax and step away from the real world for a while
- Spend half an hour in the garden or out in the open air to appreciate nature - this will help put the world into perspective and give you time to focus on some of real beauty that exists on our doorsteps
- Have a jigsaw or a puzzle on the go and take half an hour with a cup of tea to complete a little more of it

Whatever you choose to do, it's important to realise that spending valuable time on yourself is OK, indeed it is necessary to maintain your own wellbeing, and wherever possible try to involve a neighbour or a friend to ensure you can discuss your feelings openly with someone who can listen without judging.

But more than anything, remember that you matter just as much as the person you care for and it's OK to show yourself some compassion every day

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