

# Supporting Carers

## Carer Gateway

Providing informal care and support to a family member or friend with a disability, medical condition, mental illness, drug and alcohol dependency or who is frail due to age, is providing more than an extension of your relationship to this person.

The informal care and support you give plays a pivotal role in their life, but it's important to take time to care for yourself too; that's why Carer Gateway is here to help.

Carer Gateway is a Federal Government funded initiative aimed at supporting the 2.65 million carers across Australia.

The additional pressure and stress placed on carers over the past two years of the pandemic has highlighted the importance of reaching out for help early. By calling Carer Gateway 1800 422 737, you will be guided through the registration process to access a range of services and support based on your individual circumstances and needs.

Carer Gateway can offer services and support such as planned and emergency respite care, tailored support packages, coaching, counselling, peer support and more.

### Case Study - Leanne

Leanne is the primary carer for her husband and during the initial COVID-19 lockdown she felt as though she was losing the colour in her own life, that was until she reached out to Carer Gateway.

**"I initially made contact as I could feel myself going downhill and didn't think I would have the energy to navigate another service, then lockdown happened and I wondered how I would get through when all my survival kit had been ripped away with restrictions. I accessed everything that the Carers NSW Carer Gateway offered, thinking if I change my mind I can always say no later. The thought of a zoom In Person Peer Support and zoom counselling did not excite me, but I must say, I got so much out of them. I am now feeling better equipped in all areas." - Leanne carer for her husband.**



## Carer Gateway resources:

**Carer Gateway Emergency Care Plan:** An Emergency Care Plan is a document that provides instructions and guidance to allow someone else to step in and provide the care that you would normally provide. This provides reassurance that the person you care for will receive the support they need should anything happen to you.

The emergency care plan has:

- emergency contacts
- the care needs of the person you care for
- medical information and contacts
- a medicine list
- carer emergency cards

A Carer Gateway [Emergency Care Plan Template](#) has been created specifically for carers.

# Tools



## Carers NSW

Carers NSW is the dedicated Carer Gateway Service Provider for carers living in the Central Coast, Hunter New England and North Coast regions of New South Wales.

Carers NSW has a number of online education resources for carers and service providers, designed to provide information, knowledge and skills that will enhance the caring role, help strengthen resilience and improve overall health and wellbeing.

These resources include:

**Disaster Planning Handbook and Checklist** explores the disasters carers may face, additional needs when caring for someone, tools and knowledge that may help, and who can assist before, during and after a disaster event. Copies of the evacuation checklist and go kit checklist can be found [here](#).

**Navigating My Aged Care** provides information on accessing aged care services: where to start, who is eligible the assessment process and services available. View it [here](#).

**Managing COVID-19 at home** is a guide for carers which includes a NSW Health fact sheet along with two new Carers NSW fact resources: Preparing for self-isolation checklist and the Alternative carer arrangements during COVID-19 fact sheet.

To find out more or to download any of the above resources click [here](#).

**Video resources** including an overview of Carer Gateway services and supports, and how to access these, as well as an in-depth explanation of the Disaster Planning resource are also available by clicking the [link](#).

**Carers NSW wellbeing workshops:** Carers are encouraged to take time for themselves through a range of wellbeing workshops including Strength and Balance, Mindfulness Meditation, Art for Wellbeing, Laughter Yoga and Dance Moves. This program is running until early April 2022. For more information and to register click the [link](#).

## Remember there is support for you too!

Call Carer Gateway today on 1800 422 737 or visit [www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au) for more information.



1800 422 737  
carergateway.gov.au





# Introducing One Door

## Carer Services

If someone in your family or someone you are close to is living with a mental illness and you support them in any way at all, you are considered their carer; someone who provides some additional support when needed. You do not have to live with the person you are providing support to be a carer.

Many carers don't identify as such, because they see taking care of their loved one, as just part of being a family member or good friend.

Providing additional support and connection to a close friend or family member comes with its own set of challenges outside of everyday tasks. Some concerns may include,

- your own stress levels
- better understanding of the public mental health system
- understanding more about the condition
- knowing about other local supports

The range of mental health conditions we provide support for include anxiety, depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, personality disorders, eating disorders and psychosis.

One Door Carer Services provides free support through one-on-one emotional support (in person or by phone), our online and face to face educational workshops and support groups.

We can advocate with you to navigate the mental health system, and other organisations, and will walk beside you as you find your way.

One Door Carer Services also provides support to those considered to be young carers, ages 8 to 25 years. We can provide age-appropriate information and avenues for support, as well as one to one individual support to youth and young adults.

One Door Mental Health is the service provider for the NSW Family and Carer Mental Health Program in partnership with five Local Health Districts (LHD) including Hunter New England.

## Self Care During Challenging Times

When there are extra challenges, it is even more important to find ways to attend to yourself and your own needs so that you have the energy and clear thinking to be able to help support others.

There are many ways to care for yourself and recharge your own batteries but it can be hard at times to tap into your own wisdom and knowledge on the matter.

Some simple ideas that might work for you, to help you recharge:

- notice three things that you are grateful for in your own personal life and say a small inner thank you for each. Best to do this just before bedtime or first thing in the morning.
- do an activity that helps you feel relaxed and calm...for 5 to 15 min per day, every day. You can find free Guided Relaxation videos by searching the internet or just sit still and focus on breathing slowly and deeply.
- using coloured markers and paper, starting with a simple circle, just doodle, letting the drawing go in all sorts of directions
- call a friend or family member who is helpful or kind
- listen to some music that helps you feel good
- re-read a favourite book
- step outside and tend the garden or your indoor plants
- go for a walk in a different part of your neighbourhood and notice the variety of front gardens

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