

# Helpful Services

## Carer Gateway

Provides practical and emotional support and advice for families and carers. Carer Gateway is an Australian Government program providing free services and support for carers.

1800 422 737 (Mon - Fri, 8.00am - 5.00pm)  
[carergateway.gov.au](http://carergateway.gov.au)

## SANE Forums

A safe and anonymous online forum for families and carers, moderated by mental health professionals. Share experiences, and seek advice and support.

1800 187 263 (Mon - Fri, 10.00am - 8.00pm)  
[saneforums.org](http://saneforums.org)

## The Family and Carer Mental Health Program

A program run across NSW that offers support groups, social events, educational sessions and individual advocacy for families and carers. You can find the closest program to you by visiting the website below.

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/carers/Pages/support.aspx>

# Immediate Support

Ring 000 if your life is in immediate danger. For immediate support, you can contact:

## Lifeline (24/7)

13 11 14  
[lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)

## Suicide Call Back Service (24/7)

1300 659 467  
[suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

## 13YARN (24/7)

13 92 76  
[13yarn.org.au](http://13yarn.org.au)

## QLife (3.00pm - 12.00 midnight)

1800 184 527  
[qlife.org.au](http://qlife.org.au)

## Kids Helpline (24/7)

1800 55 1800  
[kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)

# About MHCN

MHCN is the peak body for mental health carers in NSW, and advocates systemically for mental health reform in NSW.

 02 9332 0777 (Mon - Fri, 9.00am - 5.00pm)

 [mhcnadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org](mailto:mhcnadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org)

 [mentalhealthcarersnsw.org](http://mentalhealthcarersnsw.org)

 [facebook.com/mentalhealthcarers](https://facebook.com/mentalhealthcarers)

 [@mentalhealthcarersnsw](https://www.instagram.com/mentalhealthcarersnsw)

 [mentalhealthcarersnsw](https://twitter.com/mentalhealthcarersnsw)



# Carers taking care of yourself



## Mental Health Carers NSW



## Why is self-care important?

Taking care of someone living with a mental health condition can be challenging. It may be hard to juggle between your care giving role and other responsibilities, financial strains, emotional and physical stress, and much more. Carers and family members of a loved one with a mental health condition spend approximately 40 hours or more per week in the caring role ([Carers NSW Annual Carer Survey 2024 p.g.5](#)).

Carers often put themselves last - but if you don't care for yourself, you may become mentally and physically burnt out, and you may even become unwell yourself.

## Where do I start?

**Professional Support:** A good starting place is to speak with a health care professional, such as a GP or a counsellor, as they can provide different strategies and support tailored to your specific needs. You can also ask a GP if you are eligible for a mental health plan which entitles you to 6 (and a further 4 if reviewed) sessions with a psychologist which can be rebated through Medicare or may be offered at a reduced rate.

You can find a psychologist near you via the Australian Psychological Society directory: <https://psychology.org.au/find-a-psychologist>

## Ways to take care of yourself

**Psychoeducation:** MHCN run a range of online training sessions designed to support carers and families in their caring role. You can read more and register for them by visiting the training section on our website: <https://www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org/learn/training-and-education/>

The Family and Carer Mental Health Program offers free psychoeducational workshops and training for carers. They also run support groups and social events, as well as individual advocacy (see the 'helpful services' section).

**Exercise:** at the start of the day, try to do physical activities you enjoy e.g. go for a walk or check out free workout classes on YouTube. If that's not possible, try to walk around the house or stand up and stretch every few hours, even if only for a few minutes each time.

**Sleep:** try to reduce caffeine intake and alcohol later on in the day as it may impact your sleep quality. Before bed, take a warm bath, and listen to soothing calm music. Establish a regular sleeping pattern. Try to get 7 - 9 hours of sleep each night and try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.

**Hobbies:** think about what the things that interest you are, and try to do at least one of them each day, even if it's only for a short period of time.

**Diet:** try to maintain a healthy, balanced diet. Remember to stay hydrated and drink lots of water.

**Physical health:** you need to take care of yourself by looking after your health. Eat a good diet, exercise, get plenty of sleep, and go to your doctor if you are feeling unwell.

**Connectedness:** finding time out from your caring role may be hard but try to make time to connect with friends and family. Reach out, stay in touch and talk to those who support and encourage you. You could also try to plan a monthly night out with your partner, friends or family members.

**Support:** Reach out to carer support groups in the community to talk to other carers with similar experiences. SANE run a supportive online forum for carers. The Family and Carer Mental Health Program also runs support groups (see 'helpful services' section).

**Self reflection:** take some time out to reflect, even if it is just 10 minutes a day. Write down your thoughts in a journal or diary. Writing can be quite soothing and therapeutic.

