

Asking family and friends for help

While there are many joys in caring for a family member or friend, we understand there are also many frustrations and challenges. During this holiday season, if you need a little help to enjoy a day or weekend to yourself, Carers NSW have shared these great tips:

How and why should carers get help from family and friends with caring?

Sharing the care with other family members or friends can buffer the stress and reduce the physical and emotional toll for the main carer. It can also help family and friends to:

- Understand the situation better
- Offer you a listening ear and support when needed
- Know how to help without interfering
- Offer information or suggestions
- Contribute to decision making
- Understand what needs to happen in an emergency (when the carer cannot provide the care).

Having others involved in caring can have real benefits for the person you're caring for too

It can provide them with:

- Opportunities for spending time with others
- Different people to talk to
- More people to rely on – a sense of being well supported
- Other sources of information, advice and suggestions
- Relief, that the main carer is being supported
- The person you care for may be quite concerned about your health and wellbeing and feel somewhat responsible for this
- Sharing the care can be a relief and benefit to all involved.

Why you may be reluctant to ask family for help

There are many reasons why carers are often reluctant to ask family or friends to help. This may be because you:

- Believe that earlier requests were not heard
- Don't want to impose on family and friends who seem busy
- Want to protect family from some of the emotional pain
- Believe that asking for help is a sign of failure
- Want to protect the dignity or privacy of the person you care for
- Were asked by the person you care for not to involve others
- Are upholding your wedding vows, believing that your commitment was 'for better or worse'. Asking for and accepting the help of family and friends is not a sign of failure or of disrespecting your wedding vows.

Caring is an important job – one that can sometimes involve round-the-clock care and support, which would never be expected in a paid job. Where possible, sharing the care with family and friends can ensure that you look after the person you care for while looking after yourself too.

continued overleaf ►



The Byron carer

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Byron Shire Respite Service is located at the Brunswick Valley Community Centre, South Beach Rd, Brunswick Heads.

Our incorporated non-government community based organisation is managed by a local committee and covers the shires of Byron, Ballina and Lismore.

NDIS Registered Provider

Respite care is delivered through our Flexible Respite, Day Respite and Social Support projects, with a person centred enablement approach across the respite continuum.

Telephone Janine on: 02) 6685 1629
or Peter on: 02) 6685 1921

Website: www.byronrespite.com.au
Email: service@byronrespite.com.au



Byron Shire Respite Service acknowledge and pay respect to the Arakwal people of the Bundjalung nation, the traditional owners of the land on which we live and care – and pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging.

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What if family seem reluctant to help?

Sometimes family members will be reluctant to help. This may be because of busy work and family lives or the sheer number of commitments they have at that particular time.

Sometimes though, this 'busy-ness' is a way of keeping their mind off family concerns. They may actually be quite worried and want to help out but may not know what to do or how to ask. When confronted with a chronic health condition or disability, some people just don't know what to say.

Here are some suggestions for getting family involved:

- Talk openly about caring - the rewards and challenges.
- Don't try to protect your family - tell them how you feel.

- Try to stay calm when talking with your family. They may not yet see things the way you do – it will take time.
- Let them know that help is welcome – it's not interference.
- Be upfront and ask your family to help.
- Name some things that your family could help with at times that they are available, like evenings or weekends.

For example:

- Helping with the bedtime routine three times a week.
- Taking the person you care for on a weekend outing.
- Taking the person you care for to a routine appointment.
- Cooking extra meals for you to freeze.
- Helping with the garden or maintenance of the home.

Planning for the end of your loved-one's life

Last month we discussed being a carer of someone who is nearing the end of their life and that this can be an emotional and stressful time.

In this month's newsletter, we take a look at the next steps:

What to expect

- Just before someone dies they may become restless, have hallucinations and even try to get out of bed.
- Stay with them to keep them calm.
- Sometimes they become clear-headed briefly in the last hours before they die.
- You will know the person has died when their breathing stops, you can't rouse them and there is no pulse.
- They won't blink, even if their eyelids are open, and their pupils will become large and won't change in the light.
- Their skin may become cool and pale.

It's important to be prepared and to make arrangements so you don't have to worry

about them after the person has died. It may be a good idea to tell family and friends so they can come and say goodbye. You will also need plenty of support for yourself at this time.

What you will need to do when someone dies at home

Try to stay calm. You will need to ask a doctor to come and issue a Doctor's Certificate of Cause of Death, but there's no rush. Do everything in your own time. If the death happens at night, it's fine to wait until morning.

Your doctor or support team will probably have told you what to do if the death was expected.

Call the doctor's surgery and ask them to come to issue the certificate.

If the death wasn't expected or if the person didn't have a regular doctor, you can contact the police and they can help to arrange the Doctor's Certificate of Cause of Death.

There is no rush to move the body. When you are ready, you can contact a funeral director to come and take the body away. The funeral director will come as soon as possible and talk with you about what happens next.

Legal steps and duties after death

When someone dies, there are legal steps that need to happen. You don't have to do everything alone. You can ask family and friends to help, and there is a lot of help available from government and community groups.

Death and grieving

Grief is a natural response to any loss. That loss might be a death, or it might be for the loss of the person as you knew them. If you're grieving, remember that you're not alone and help is available.

What to expect when you are grieving

Grief is an individual experience, and there is no right way or set time to grieve.

Even if the death was expected, you may still feel sad, fearful or panicky.

It's also normal to feel relief, or to feel no emotions at all. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

Try to be kind to yourself, and forgive others who may not know what to say or how to support you.

Don't bottle it up – find someone to talk with, whether that's a family member, friend, professional counsellor or bereavement support group. Don't be afraid to cry.

Getting help with grief

Many organisations and services can help you to manage grief:

- Lifeline – call 13 11 14
- beyondblue – call 1300 22 4636
- Carer Gateway Counselling Service – call 1800 422 737 and Select Option 2
- Kids Helpline – call 1800 55 1800
- GriefLine – call 1300 845 745

Tips from other carers on getting family involved

- Go gently but be persistent. It may take time.
- This is not your job exclusively – it's your right to ask for help.
- If the person you care for doesn't want others involved, bargain with them. Try to agree on getting help with some tasks.
- If your family does get involved, don't expect that they'll do things your way. Make suggestions and then trust them.

To read the original transcript of this article and find out more, visit: <https://www.carersnsw.org.au/Assets/Files/HowFamilyHelpWithCaring.pdf>

You also don't have to do everything straight away. You can choose to do some tasks first, and wait till you're ready to do others.

Legal duties when someone dies

The first step is to register the death with your state or territory's registry of births, deaths and marriages. The funeral director can do this for you.

You will then receive an official death certificate, which you will need to organise the person's estate, claim insurance or deal with their money. If the person had a will, the executor will pay the person's debts, distribute the person's assets according to their will, and inform government agencies.

Getting help with legal duties

You can find more information from:

- Australian Government – Death and bereavement. <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/death-and-bereavement>
- Australian Taxation Office – Notification of a deceased person. <https://www.ato.gov.au/forms/notification-of-a-deceased-person>
- MoneySmart – Wills and power of attorney. <https://moneysmart.gov.au/wills-and-powers-of-attorney>
- MoneySmart – Losing your partner. <https://moneysmart.gov.au/losing-your-partner>
- If you would like to find out more about the dying process, visit Palliative Care Australia's page at: <https://palliativecare.org.au/resources/the-dying-process>

Need support?

- **Carer Gateway** telephone: 1800 422 737 for information about planned & emergency respite & other carer supports. www.carergateway.gov.au
- **Australian Government Department of Health** For more information about COVID-19 call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 or www.health.gov.au
- **My Aged Care** telephone: 1800 200 422 for information about the Australian Government's aged care system and services. www.myagedcare.gov.au

If you require emergency respite care, please call the Carer Gateway:

1800 422 737

- **Telephone Janine at Byron Shire Respite Service to discuss your role as a carer.** telephone: (02) 6685 1629
- **National Dementia Helpline** telephone: 1800 100 500
- **Carers Counselling Service** telephone: (02) 6628 6416
- **Carers NSW** telephone: 1800 242 636
- **Sandra Kimball Counselling** telephone: 0458 175 962
- **National Continence Helpline** telephone: 1800 330 066
- **NSW Elder Abuse Helpline** telephone: 1800 628 221

Aids:

- **Byron Ballina Home Maintenance and Modification Service 1/65 Centennial Circuit, Byron Bay** telephone: (02) 6685 7312
- **Lismore Home Maintenance and Modification Service 43 Habib Dr, South Lismore** telephone: (02) 6622 2323
- **Bright Sky Cards for Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS)** telephone: 1300 886 601

Need Transport?

- **Byron Shire Respite Service** can assist with transport to medical appointments. Telephone Janine: (02) 6685 1629
- **Byron Shire Limousines** telephone: (02) 6685 5008 Travel for medical appointments free with travel voucher or for Veteran and Widow Gold Card holders
- **Brunswick Limousines** telephone David on: 0412 855 747
- **Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport** telephone: 1300 875 895 Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport provide transport to medical appointments, weekly & fortnightly shopping outings & monthly social outings. The service is funded to support older people living at home independently or have a permanent disability or Indigenous Australians aged over 50 years. Phone Kathryn in the Byron office on: 1300 875 895 for transport to medical appointments or Amanda for any shopping bus or social bus enquiries.

Centre-based respite

Many carers find that a regular break means that they can recharge and avoid burn out. It also gives a person with dementia an opportunity to socialise and enjoy the company of others.

The Australian Government funds different types of respite to help families and carers. This includes our day program at Brunswick Heads and respite care provided in the home and community. At Byron Shire Respite Service, these supports are subsidised by the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

Start with small breaks

It's important to plan for a positive respite experience and centre-based respite is a great way for both you and the person you care for to gain confidence. According to Dementia Australia, many families and carers find it best to start with small breaks and build up to longer ones such as residential respite. Often people with dementia have been socially isolated for some time, and day programs promote a happy and safe environment for people to enjoy familiar activities and form new friendships.

Dealing with any difficulties

Occasionally difficulties can arise, particularly when trying residential respite outside the home for the first time. Some families and carers find that the person does not wish to leave them, or that they want to come home when staying overnight in a residential facility. Other families and carers are concerned about uncharacteristic behaviours that occur when using respite or the effects on a person with dementia when they return home after respite.

These problems are not unusual and should not stop you from planning a trip in advance to visit family or friends or take time out for yourself for a few days. There are many ways to manage these difficulties so that both you and the person you are caring for can make the most of respite care.

To view the original transcript of this article, visit: <https://www.dementia.org.au/i-am-a-carer-family-member-or-friend/taking-care-of-yourself/using-respite-care>

To find out more about your eligibility for residential respite, visit: <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/assessment-decision-residential-respite-care> OR telephone: My Aged Care on 1800 200 422.



Clients enjoy art-making activities with Kerry at the Brunswick Heads centre-based program.



Holiday closures at the centre

The centre-based program will be closed for 2 weeks for the summer holidays.

The last centre-based day will be Friday the 18th of December 2020 and we will re-open on Monday the 4th of January, 2021.

If you require support during this time, please telephone Janine at the centre to discuss your needs. If you require emergency respite at any stage, please telephone the Carers Gateway on 1800 422 737

All the staff at Byron Shire Respite Service wish you a safe and happy holiday season and look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

When planning to use respite:

- Discuss with the staff the type of respite available and what will work best for you and the person with dementia
- Communicate your needs and the needs of the person with dementia clearly and openly and give important information to the respite worker or facility
- Knowing the individual likes and dislikes of the person will help staff care more easily, and will help minimise any changes
- Share historical information about the person's life
- Explain what is important to you and the person with dementia about the care they receive.

Talk with others

You might get some practical ideas by talking with other people and carers in a similar situation about ways they've managed to make respite a positive experience.

Keep trying

Respite is an adjustment for families, carers and the person with dementia, and it can take time to build a sense of trust. Perhaps planning to do something differently next time will improve the experience.

The team at Byron Shire Respite Service is here to help you try again and develop new care strategies or service options. Don't be afraid to ask!

Remember that regular breaks are important for all families, carers and people with dementia. You will almost certainly enhance your ability to carry out the demanding role of caring for someone with dementia – so keep trying.

Byron Shire Respite Service - Day Program Timetable

monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday
10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm Bus Outings <i>shopping days</i>	10am – 3pm centre-based activities for older people	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>



Lunch, morning and afternoon tea is provided. The cost for the day including transport is \$22.00 (Fees subject to change).

For more information, please contact centre on 02) 6685 1921 Email: service@byronrespite.com.au