

Carer Health and Wellbeing



Carer wellbeing

What is carer wellbeing?

Carer wellbeing refers to the physical, emotional, and mental health of an individual who provides care and support to a family member or friend. This can include things like managing stress, maintaining self-care and self-compassion, and finding a balance between the caring role and other aspects of life.

Why is carer wellbeing important?

Wellbeing is fundamental to overall health and happiness. Having a great sense of wellbeing increase physical benefits, as well as lowers incidences of stress, depression, and other negative health outcomes. Taking the time to focus on ones own body and mind improves the capacity to bounce back from difficulties, maintain a positive mindset, and continue to provide care and support to a family member or friend who lives with a disability, mental illness, alcohol or drug dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail due to age.

Signs of poor wellbeing

There are many signs that can indicate poor wellbeing. Some common signs include:

Physical symptoms

Fatigue, frequent colds or infections, changes in appetite or weight, and aches and pains are all physical signs that something may be wrong.

Emotional symptoms

Feeling anxious, sad, or irritable, experiencing mood swings, or feeling overwhelmed or stressed are all emotional signs of poor wellbeing.

Mental symptoms

Difficulty concentrating, memory problems, lack of motivation, and feeling hopeless or helpless are all mental signs that something may be wrong.

Behavioural symptoms

Changes in sleeping or eating habits, increased use of alcohol or drugs, withdrawing from social activities, and difficulty with daily tasks are all behavioural signs of poor wellbeing.

Low energy, lack of interest

Low energy, lack of interest in things you used to enjoy, feeling guilty or ashamed of your caring role, and feeling like you have no control over your life are other signs of poor wellbeing.

It's important to note that everyone experiences these symptoms from time to time, but if they persist or interfere with daily life, it's important to seek professional help. It is also important to recognise that some of these symptoms may be due to the stress of caring, and it is important to seek support and resources to manage them.



1 in 2 carers who responded to the 2022 National Carer Survey experienced high or very high psychological distress, and over 1 in 2 felt socially isolated

- 2022 National Carer Survey Highlights



Improving your wellbeing

There are many things that someone can do to improve their wellbeing. Some examples include:

Exercise regularly

Exercise has been shown to improve physical health, reduce stress and anxiety, and boost mood.

Eat a healthy diet

Eating a balanced diet that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein can improve overall health and energy levels.

Get enough sleep

Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night to improve physical and mental health, and to increase energy levels during the day.

Practice mindfulness

Mindfulness practices, such as meditation and yoga, can help reduce stress and improve mental health.

Connect with others

Strong social connections have been linked to better physical and mental health. Make time to connect with friends and family, and consider joining a group or club to meet new people with similar interests.

Do things you enjoy

Engage in activities that bring you pleasure and fulfillment. This can include hobbies, creative pursuits, or volunteer work.

Seek professional help if needed

If you're struggling with mental health issues such as depression or anxiety, it's important to seek help from a qualified professional.

Remember that everyone is different, and what works for one person may not work for another. It may take some trial and error to find what works for you, but the most important thing is to start making changes and keep trying.

Taking the first step

Taking the first step towards improving your wellbeing can be challenging, but it's important to remember that small changes can make a big difference. Here are some tips on how to take the first step:

Be honest with yourself

Recognise and acknowledge that you're not feeling your best, and that you need to make changes in order to improve your wellbeing.

Set realistic goals

It can be helpful to set small, achievable goals that you can work towards. For example, if you're not exercising regularly, start by setting a goal to go for a walk around the block every day for a week.

Make a plan

Once you've set your goals, make a plan to achieve them. Write down specific steps you need to take and when you'll take them.

Take action

Start taking the steps you need to take to achieve your goals. Remember that it's okay to start small and build up gradually.

Be kind to yourself

Remember that change takes time, and that it's okay to slip up or make mistakes. Be compassionate and understanding with yourself, and try to approach your journey towards better wellbeing with a positive attitude.

Review, reflect, and adjust

It's important to reflect on the progress you've made and adjust your plan if necessary. If you find that you are not achieving your goals, don't be discouraged. Review the plan, identify the challenges and make adjustments to overcome them.

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Carers can benefit from professional assistance, one-to-one counselling and attending peer support groups.

More information is available through Carers NSW

www.carersnsw.org.au

and Carer Gateway

www.carergateway.gov.au

or call 1800 422 737