

Carer Health and Wellbeing



Connecting with carers online

Online communities provide a sense of belonging and understanding

Caring responsibilities can be time-consuming and can make it difficult to maintain connections with friends and family. Online connections can provide a way to stay connected with others and participate in social activities, even when you are unable to leave the house or take a break from your caring duties.

Sharing information and resources

Carers often need access to a wide range of information and resources, including medical information, financial assistance, and practical tips for managing caring responsibilities. Connecting with others online can provide access to a wealth of knowledge that can be helpful to you in your caring role.

"I learned some wonderful tips about how to use my Dad's carer package from a savvy carer. It really made a big difference."

- carer for her ageing parents

Connecting with others online

Online communities can be a source of practical advice and emotional support. There are many ways to connect with others online.

Social media platforms

Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allow you to connect with friends and family, share photos and updates, and join communities of people with similar interests.

Video conferencing

Video conferencing tools such as Zoom, Skype, and Microsoft Teams allow you to have face-to-face conversations and meetings with people from anywhere in the world.

Online forums

Online forums and discussion groups allow you to connect with people who have similar interests and engage in conversations about a variety of topics, including carer-specific groups.

Instant messaging apps

Instant messaging apps like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Microsoft Teams allow you to communicate with individuals or groups in real-time.

Virtual reality experiences

Virtual reality experiences can allow you to connect with others in immersive, interactive environments.

Costs

Most online platforms and forums are free to join. However some may include a fee. For example, some platforms may require a paid subscription or membership fee, while others may be free to join but require payment for certain features or services. It is important to review the terms of service and pricing information before joining to ensure you understand any costs that may be associated with it.



"I can't leave my parents at home by themselves. Caring is 24/7 for me. I appreciate being able to meet with others online in similar situations around the state which reduces the isolation."

- carer for her ageing parents



Taking the first step

If you are a carer and you want to connect with others online, there are several steps you can take.

Identify your goal for connecting with others online

Do you want to find support from other carers, share information and resources, or simply socialise and have some fun? Knowing what you hope to gain from online connections can help you choose the right platforms and communities.

Select a platform

There are many options available, including social media, forums, and video conferencing tools. Consider which platforms are most popular among carers, or which ones offer the features you are looking for (e.g. private messaging, groups, etc.) Most platforms are free to use.

Create an account

Most platforms will require you to create a personal account. Follow the instructions for creating an account and filling out your profile on the platform you have chosen. Consider what information you wish to share about yourself (e.g. your role as a carer, your location, your interests).

Search for topics of interest

Look for communities or groups related to carers, or search for other individuals who may be interested in connecting. Follow, friend, or join these groups, and start participating in conversations or sharing updates. You may want to reach out to individuals directly and introduce yourself.

Be careful

Remember that online interactions are still social interactions, and it is important to be respectful and considerate of others. This includes being mindful of privacy, not oversharing personal information, and following the rules and guidelines of the platform or community.

"It was great how people come together and enjoyed talking with each other and learning from each other as well as receiving education."

- carer for adult son

Online Safety

There are several things that you can do to protect yourself online.

Protect your personal information

Be cautious about sharing personal information such as your full name, home address, phone number, or financial information online. Only share this information with trusted sources, and consider using an alias or initials instead of your full name.

Use strong passwords

Use strong, unique passwords for all of your online accounts, and consider using a password manager to help you keep track of them. Avoid using the same password for multiple accounts, and change your passwords regularly.

Be aware of scams

Be on the lookout for scams and phishing attacks, which are attempts to trick you into sharing personal information or clicking on malicious links. Be wary of unexpected emails or messages, and never click on links or download attachments from unknown sources.

Use security software

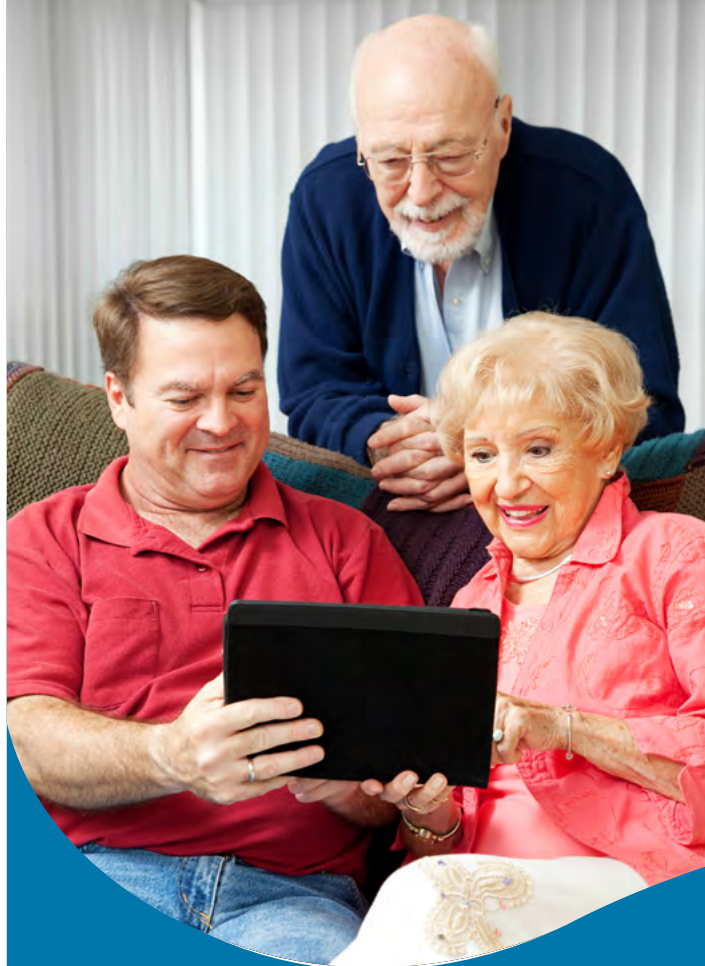
Consider using security software such as antivirus and firewall software to protect your devices from online threats. Keep this software up to date to ensure that it is effective at detecting and blocking threats.

Use privacy settings

Most online platforms offer privacy settings that allow you to control who can see your profile, personal information and activity. Be sure to review and understand the privacy settings on any platform you use, and adjust them as needed to protect your privacy.

Be cautious with online friendships

Be cautious about forming online friendships, especially with people you have never met in person. Use caution when sharing personal information with online friends, and be aware that not everyone online is who they claim to be.



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

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