

## Tips from Carers

The team behind Carer Help spoke with people who are currently caring for, or used to care for, a partner, relative or friend at the end of their life. Below are tips on what they thought was useful. If you need additional help, contact Carers Australia (1800 242 636) or the local state or territory Carer Association.

- Look after yourself and take some time out. Your mental and physical health is important. You can't support others if you are unwell.
- Don't feel guilty. You are doing the best you can.
- Plan ahead. Although the demands of caring for someone with advanced disease can be hard and time-consuming, try to find time to stay connected with work, friends and family. Staying connected will make the future easier for you.
- Think about where the best place is for the person you are caring for to be looked after. Consider the person's needs, and your own health and ability to provide care. It is okay to change your mind.
- Look at what financial supports may be available and speak to Centrelink early because applications for assistance can take a long time to process.
- Think ahead about the types of services or supports you might need later on and identify those services or people who can help you early.
- Register for My Aged Care even if you do not need it now. It can be a slow process.
- Take steps to change names on mortgages, bank accounts, et cetera.
- Ensure you have a GP (or other health professional) that you are comfortable talking with.
- If you feel like you need some additional emotional support, ask your GP about a Mental Health Care Plan. These plans give you access to a limited number of sessions with a psychologist or other mental health professional that are subsidised by Medicare. They can even be free if that professional bulk bills.
- Ask your GP or health care team if there is respite available to give you a short break from caring. Use respite, if available.
- Ask for help and accept help when it is offered.
- Ask about equipment, such as a hospital bed or wheelchair, which may be helpful if you are caring at home.
- Write any questions down that you might have prior to going to appointments (it's hard to remember everything you want to ask!).
- Don't be afraid to call a helpline. The people on the other end of the phone have a lot of knowledge and suggestions about caring and also provide emotional support and reassurance.
- If there is something you don't understand, don't be afraid to ask questions.

**CarerHelp is here when you need it.**  
[www.carerhelp.com.au](http://www.carerhelp.com.au)