



You Matter Too: A Guide for Carers

Support, Resources, and Permission to Look After Yourself

Prepared by Your Story Community Supports

If you're caring for someone with a disability, this guide is for you.

Not the person you support. Not the system. *You*.

Because somewhere between the appointments, the advocacy, the sleepless nights, and the constant planning — you matter too.

You Are Not Alone

There are over 2.65 million unpaid carers in Australia. Many of them feel invisible. They don't identify as "carers" — they're just doing what needs to be done for someone they love.

If any of this sounds familiar, you're a carer:

- You help someone with daily tasks they can't do alone
- You manage medications, appointments, or therapy schedules
- You provide emotional support during difficult times
- You coordinate with providers, the NDIS, or hospitals
- You worry about what would happen if you weren't there

What Carers Often Feel (But Rarely Say)

Exhaustion. Not just physical — the mental load of always being "on."

Guilt. For feeling frustrated. For wanting a break. For not being able to do more.

Isolation. Friends don't always understand. Social life shrinks. The world feels smaller.

Grief. For the life you expected. For the relationship you imagined. For the freedom you've lost.

Love. Deep, complicated, fierce love that keeps you going even when everything else is hard.

All of these feelings can exist at the same time. That's not a contradiction — it's the reality of caring.



You Deserve Support Too

Caring for someone doesn't mean you have to do it alone, and it doesn't mean your own needs stop mattering.

Here's what's available to you:

Carer Gateway

The Australian Government's Carer Gateway provides free services for carers, including:

- **Counselling** — up to 6 sessions with a professional
- **Peer support** — connect with other carers who understand
- **Coaching** — practical strategies for managing the caring role
- **Emergency respite** — if you're in crisis and need immediate relief
- **Planned respite** — regular breaks so you can recharge
- **Skills courses** — online and in-person workshops

Call: 1800 422 737 (Mon–Fri, 8am–5pm) • **Website:** www.carergateway.gov.au

Your Story Community Supports is a registered Carer Gateway delivery partner — we can help you access these services directly.

Respite Care

Respite gives you a break while your family member is supported by trained professionals. Options include:

- **In-home respite** — a support worker comes to your home
- **Short-term accommodation** — your family member stays in a supported setting for a few days
- **Emergency respite** — available when you're in crisis

Respite is not a luxury. It's a necessity. Taking a break makes you a better carer, not a worse one.

Carer Allowance and Carer Payment

You may be eligible for financial support from Centrelink:

- **Carer Allowance** — a fortnightly supplement for carers providing daily care
- **Carer Payment** — an income support payment for carers who can't work full-time due to their caring role

Contact Centrelink on **132 717** or visit www.servicesaustralia.gov.au



Practical Tips for Looking After Yourself

Build a support network

You don't have to do everything yourself. Identify people who can help — family, friends, neighbours, support workers — and let them.

Schedule time for yourself

Even 30 minutes a day. A walk. A coffee. A phone call with a friend. Put it in the calendar and protect it.

Stay connected

Isolation creeps in slowly. Make an effort to maintain friendships and social connections, even when it's hard.

Know your limits

It's okay to say "I can't do this today." It's okay to ask for help. It's okay to feel overwhelmed.

Talk to someone

A counsellor, a friend, a carer support group — talking about what you're going through makes a real difference. Carer Gateway offers free counselling.

Keep your own health in check

Carers often neglect their own health. Keep up with your GP appointments, eat well, and move your body when you can.

Warning Signs of Carer Burnout

If you're experiencing several of these, it's time to ask for help:

- Constant exhaustion that sleep doesn't fix
- Feeling resentful toward the person you care for
- Withdrawing from friends and activities
- Getting sick more often
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- Feeling hopeless or trapped
- Losing interest in things you used to enjoy
- Snapping at people more than usual

Burnout is not a personal failure. It's a signal that you need more support.



What Your Story Can Do for You

As a registered Carer Gateway delivery partner, we can help you access:

- Planned and emergency respite
- Carer counselling referrals
- Peer support connections
- Practical coaching and skills development

We also provide SIL, community participation, and in-home support for the person you care for — which means less on your plate and more confidence that they're in good hands.

A Letter to You

You didn't choose this role. Or maybe you did — out of love, out of duty, out of the belief that no one else would do it as well as you.

Either way, you are doing something extraordinary. And you deserve to be seen, supported, and cared for too.

Please don't wait until you're at breaking point to ask for help. The support is there. Let us help you find it.

Your story matters too.

Helpful Contacts

Service	Contact
Carer Gateway	1800 422 737
Lifeline	13 11 14 (24/7)
Beyond Blue	1300 22 4636 (24/7)
Centrelink (Carer payments)	132 717
Your Story Community Supports	www.yourstorycommunitysupports.com