



# Being a Carer



## What is a Carer?

If you look after someone in your family, a child or a friend who:

- Has a long term illness.
- Is an older person.
- Has a disability.
- Has a mental health problem.

**Then you are a carer.**



You might become a carer very suddenly. For example, if someone has an accident or gets poorly very quickly.



You might become a carer slowly. You might start helping out by doing someone's shopping.



Over time you might start doing more and more to help them.

Things like:



- Cleaning.



- Making food.



- Helping them get dressed.



Everyone's experience of caring is different but we all go through the **4 stages** of caring.





**This session will help you understand:**

- **What are the 4 stages of caring.**



- **What support you can get and where to get it.**

# The 4 Stages of Caring



## Stage 1

### When you start being a carer

You will need to learn how to look after the person.



You might have to help the person you care for, talk to lots of different people like:



- Doctors.
- Nurses.
- Hospital staff.
- Social workers.
- The council.





You might have to help organise visits and appointments for the person.



You might feel ok straight away about being a carer.



For some people it might be a big change. You might feel worried or stressed about how to care for the person.



You might also feel sad or angry that things have changed and you have to change your life.



It is ok to feel all of these things.

## Help and support

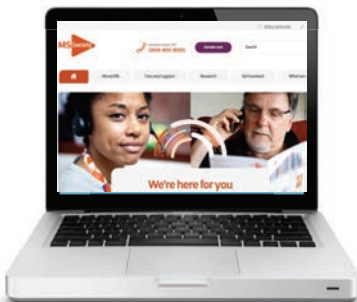


You might want to find out more information about a disability, an illness and how best to care for the person.

There are organisations who have lots of information on the internet.



- **Alzheimer's Society**  
[www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)



- **Multiple Sclerosis Society**  
[www.mssociety.org.uk](http://www.mssociety.org.uk)



- **Versus Arthritis**  
[www.versusarthritis.org](http://www.versusarthritis.org)



- **MIND Mental Health Charity**  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)







## Stage 2 Getting used to being a carer



As you get used to being a carer it becomes part of your daily routine.



At the beginning friends and family might have helped you a lot.



Now they might think you are doing a great job and you don't need their help any more.



You might not have time do the things you used to.



Things like:

- Meeting friends.



- Doing hobbies.



At work you might find it hard to do your job if you are tired or thinking about the person you care for.



You might decide you need to stop working so that you can care for them.



All of these things can make you feel upset, angry and lonely.



## Where to find help and support

Talk to your family and friends and tell them what you need help with.



## Stage 3 Knowing you are a carer



If you have been a carer for a long time you start to feel more confident.



You know what you need to do to help the person you care for and where you can get help.



You might look for carers' groups in your area or other services that can help you.



An organisation called **Carers UK** has lots of information on its website.

**Carers UK Website**  
**[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)**



You might be fine and don't need any more help or support.



Even if you have the support you need you might still feel a bit lonely.



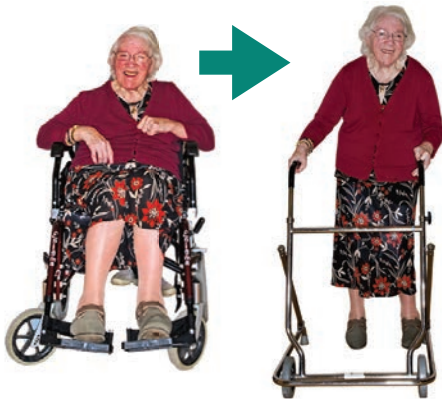
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## **Stage 4**

### **What happens when you stop being a carer**



You might stop being a carer for a few reasons.



**The person you care for doesn't need your help any more**

If they were ill they might get better.



They might learn to do things for themselves.



This can be a happy time but it can also make you feel a bit unsure about what to do next.



**The person you care for moves into a residential or nursing home**



This happens when the person cannot get the care they need at home any more.



You might feel guilty because you can't give them the care they need.



You might also feel relief that you don't have to care for the person any more.



## The person you care for dies

This can be a very sad and hard time.



If you cared for the person day and night, you might feel a bit lost and don't know what to do.



When you are ready you could think about going back to work or maybe going to college.



Lots of carers say they feel guilty, upset, angry and sad when they stop being a carer.



You might need some extra help and support to cope with these feelings. You can speak to your doctor about it.

## Useful Websites



Carers UK have lots of information on their website.

### Website

[www.carersuk.org.uk](http://www.carersuk.org.uk)

These websites can help you find a care home.



### Care Quality Website

[www.cqc.org.uk/what-we-do/services-we-regulate/find-care-home](http://www.cqc.org.uk/what-we-do/services-we-regulate/find-care-home)



### Housing Care Website

<http://www.housingcare.org/housing/index.aspx>