



Becoming a Carer

Tip Sheet

Nationally, around 2.65 million Australians provide care and support for loved ones.

Ambulance Victoria understands that becoming a carer can be a challenging and stressful time. The transition to providing support and care to others is not necessarily an easy one. Whether it be kinship, foster, aged, or disability care, it is likely that taking on a new caring role will affect an individual's home and family life, along with their work and social life.

Types of caring

Kinship/Foster Care - Care of a child from a relative/member of a child's social network (kinship), or from a trained, assessed, accredited foster carer (foster care) when the child cannot live with their parents.

Aged Care - Care for a relative, who, because of their elderly age, cannot fully take care of themselves.

Disability Care - Care for a relative, who, because of their disability, cannot fully take care of themselves.

Tips for transitioning into a carer role

Becoming a carer can take time to adjust. Your life may change significantly depending on the level and type of support your loved one needs.

In preparing for the carer role, it may be helpful to consider:

- Time off work or flexible work arrangements - *will you need to make yourself more available during the transition phase or in an ongoing capacity?*
- The logistics of caring – *e.g., living arrangements for your loved one, processes for organising appointments, spread of responsibilities across other family members or professional support services*
- A plan for your own self-care
- Relevant funding – *can you access supports through NDIS, Centrelink, or Victorian/Federal government systems?*

The Ambulance Victoria Wellbeing & Support Services is AV's internal mental health support service available 24/7 to all employees and their immediate family members, RANs, ACOs and CERTs, providing 24-hour mental health and wellbeing support.

Helpful resources

Kinship/Foster Care

- [Foster Care Association Victoria](#)
- [Mirabel Foundation](#)

Aged Care

- [My Aged Care](#)
- [Carer Gateway - Aged Care](#)

Disability Care

- [HACC Program for Younger People](#)
- [Carer Gateway – Disability Care](#)
- [NDIS](#)

Carer Support resources:

- [Victorian Support for Carers Program](#)
- [Respite care](#)
- [Carer Gateway counselling service](#)
- [Carer Gateway support group forum](#)





Becoming a Carer

Tip Sheet

- Realistic boundaries and expectations with your loved one, family members, and within yourself – *keeping these boundaries can benefit self-care and minimise conflict*
- Allied health supports – *would your loved one benefit from someone like a Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist?*
- Specialised assessments – *is there any need for assessments of capacity, functioning, homecare, guardianship, kinship/foster care arrangements?*
- Seeking out information from different local, state, and federal services and websites – *See our **Helpful Resources** list and [Family Website](#)*

Visit our Family Website:

<https://familysafe.ambulance.vic.gov.au/>

Email for VACU support:

vacu@ambulance.vic.gov.au

Want to Know More?

You can find more resources and helpful information on the Wellbeing and Support Services [Links and Resources](#) Intranet page and also in our [Videos and Podcasts](#).

Self-care as a carer

The act of caring for someone else is taxing, so it is important you continually exercise self-care. After all, it is easier to take care of someone else when we are doing well ourselves.

- Ensure regular breaks from caring – *this can be through sharing responsibilities with other family members or utilising respite services*
- Join a carers support group
- Maintain good physical health – *sleep well, eat well, exercise*
- Stay connected with friends/family and engaged with activities you enjoy
- Don't be afraid to ask for help – *a Psychologist can help with self-care and coping strategies, as well as skills for communicating boundaries effectively*
- Practice relaxation techniques
- Reach out early for professional mental health supports
- Go easy on yourself – *caring for another is not easy*



Option

- 1 Peer Support
- 2 VACU Counselling Line
- 3 AV Chaplain
- 4 Bullying & Harassment
- 5 Police Statements & Court Attendance
- 6 Alcohol and Other Drugs Advice and Support

