

National Council for the Elderly



FACT SHEET No. 2

CARERS: YOU MATTER TOO

**PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE ELDERLY BY
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TO ASSIST FAMILY CARERS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE
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This Fact Sheet has been prepared to help you think about yourself, to help you, the carer, identify your needs as a carer. It is meant to enable you make choices so that you may meet these needs and live the kind of life you want, in as far as possible. Because you may feel selfish focusing on yourself rather than on the person for whom you are caring, you may find it difficult to allow yourself to think about your own needs.

However, if you consider that the elderly person's well-being depends on your well-being, then you will realise that, far from being selfish, looking after your own physical and emotional health enables you to provide the best possible care.

In order to give to others, it is important that you begin to actively take care of your own needs.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

While there may be many joys and rewards in care-giving, carers (like everyone else) experience their own stresses and strains. Some level of stress is inevitable in our lives and so, rather than attempting to avoid it, the most useful approach is to learn to deal with it. Dealing with stress means looking after yourself physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

BEING POSITIVE ABOUT YOURSELF

There are a number of things involved here. Can you think about some of these things now and answer the following questions:

- Do you feel good about yourself?

Yes No

- Why is it important to be positive about yourself and what you do?
-
-
-

- Taking care of yourself lies in the attitudes and beliefs that **you** hold towards yourself and life in general...

because...

- Viewing life positively, focusing on happy events and successful achievements...

and...

- building up an image of yourself which is positive...

enables you...

- to withstand the wear and tear of life.

DEVELOP THE HABIT OF POSITIVE THINKING

By concentrating on the positive rather than on the negative side of things, you will find yourself having more energy and more motivation to act constructively in your life. The positive atmosphere you create around you will not only increase your own sense of well-being, it will also communicate itself to others.

TAKING TIME FOR YOURSELF

Another important step in taking care of yourself is to set aside, during each day, some time which is reserved solely for doing things

for yourself. We all need periods of relaxation and renewal in our lives, which are not always easy to make time for.

As a caregiver, the notion of taking time for yourself may seem unrealistic. If you are committed to looking after yourself, then you will find some time in the day - even if it is only ten minutes - which you can devote to something that gives you real satisfaction.

IT MAY BE USEFUL TO ENLIST THE HELP OF OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS TO GO THROUGH THIS FACT SHEET WITH YOU.

How much time do you have to yourself in a typical day? In a typical week?

If you have time for yourself, how do you use it?
What would you like to do during this free time?

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR FEELINGS

An important part of taking care of yourself involves learning to deal with your feelings. Your ability to cope with your feelings not only affects your own emotional and physical well-being, but also affects your relationship with others around you, including the person you are caring for.

Pleasant Feelings

Carers experience a range of emotions towards the elderly person in their care. Some of these are comfortable feelings such as love, devotion, concern. These comfortable feelings may be tinged with sadness that the elderly person is no longer as he/she used to be.

Unpleasant Feelings

As well as the comfortable feelings, you may also, however, experience uncomfortable feelings such as anger or resentment. You may at times feel helpless or guilty that you cannot fulfil the elderly person's every need. You may feel frightened of the changes that are taking place. Because these feelings are uncomfortable, carers often do not talk about them. However, in dealing with feelings, it is very important to remember that they do not go away by ignoring them.

Acknowledge and Accept Feelings

It is only by acknowledging and accepting your feelings, by realising that they are normal, valid reactions to life events and by expressing them openly that you can come to terms with them. Friends, close family members, and support groups for carers can all be of value in giving you the opportunity to openly talk about the feelings you experience in caring.

KEEPING UP YOUR SOCIAL CONTACTS

Like everyone else, carers also need to have a satisfying social life. It is only the rare individual who is satisfied with complete isolation. Social contact helps to prevent stress, helps us to relax, to get

involved in interests outside of working life, and provides opportunities to share our joys and concerns with others.

WHAT KIND OF SOCIAL LIFE?

People differ in the kind of social life they find most satisfactory. You may like a very active life with many people involved, or you may prefer a quiet evening with one close friend. Whatever your preference, the important thing is that you make an effort to keep your social contacts.

You may need to involve other family members or friends to ensure that you get regular breaks from caregiving. The following describes the kinds of people who make a supportive social network. Go through the list and check how many you have available to you at the moment.

DO YOU HAVE SOMEONE:

- upon whom you can depend in a crisis?

Yes No

- with whom you can discuss concerns or worries?

Yes No

- to whom you feel close?

Yes No

DO YOU HAVE SOMEONE:

- who makes you feel competent and of value?
Yes No
- who can give you important information you need?
Yes No
- who will challenge you to sit up and take a good look at yourself?
Yes No
- with whom you can share good or bad news?
Yes No
- who will give you constructive feedback?
Yes No
- who will help you out with daily routines?
Yes No

Are there gaps in your social network? Maybe you have found that you are dependent on one or two people, or that all your contacts are of one kind. If you are dissatisfied with what you have discovered,

think about the steps you might take to get the kind of social network you need.

Steps I can take

Notice what is causing you stress

One of the first steps in reducing stress is to become aware of those situations in your life that are causing it. Below are listed some common causes of stress among caregivers. Check through the list for those that apply to you and add any others that occur to you.

Source of Stress

	Applies	Does Not Apply	Do Not Know
• Not knowing for how long you are going to be a caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source of Stress

	Applies	Does Not Apply	Do Not Know
• Having had the decision of caring forced on you rather than having freely chosen it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Being of advanced age or having ill-health yourself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Not having the training or the information to provide care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Lack of free time for yourself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Loss of freedom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Changes in family life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Family conflicts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Competing demands between your role as a carer and other roles in your life (e.g. your role as a husband/wife/friend)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source of Stress

	Applies	Does Not Apply	Do Not Know
• Loss of social contacts and social life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Feelings of guilt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Financial losses or difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Changes in the elderly person's personality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Lack of sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Need a break from caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Look over those sources of stress which you have checked as applying to you. For each stressful situation, note down what steps you might begin to take to relieve the situation. **THINK ABOUT THE STRENGTHS YOU HAVE THAT WILL HELP YOU. THINK ABOUT WHOM YOU COULD CALL ON TO GIVE HELP AND SUPPORT.**

Note down what obstacles might come in your way and think about different ways of overcoming these obstacles.

Ways of overcoming obstacles

TREAT YOURSELF

Research has shown that giving yourself regular treats is an important part of dealing with stress. Work with caregivers in particular has shown that, to overcome feelings of depression or of being over-burdened, they often need to deliberately build-in pleasant events into their daily lives.

So treat yourself!

It does not necessarily have to cost money, but could be something as simple as a walk with the dog or listening to a favourite piece of music, or early bed with a good book. List all the things that give you pleasure. Choose one or two and make a plan for doing them.

What I intend to do

FINDING SUPPORT FOR YOURSELF

Draw on Informal Sources of Help

Where just one person takes on the task of caring, the demands on time and energy can be so enormous as to exhaust the caregiver.

If you are to provide the best possible care, and still look after yourself, it is important to draw on all possible sources of support, whether from informal sources such as family and friends, or from formal service providers. Family, friends, neighbours, and clergy can provide a great deal of emotional and practical support to caregivers.

Things to Remember

Often, however, people around you may not be aware that you need help, or may not know what kind of help to give. You need to ask for what you want, and let others know how they can be of help. Remember that unmet needs reduce our ability to provide care. The more people are involved in the caregiving, the more contact with others the elderly person will have.

Other family members will have their own ties with the elderly person and may welcome feeling needed and having the opportunity to be involved in caregiving.

Write down the names of all family members, friends, neighbours, and members of the clergy, from whom you are getting support at present or whom you feel would be willing to give help.

Write a list of all the help you would like

The following are some examples of the kinds of assistance that carers often say they need:

- **Someone who will take over caregiving for a short period to provide a break from caring**
- **Someone to stay with the elderly person so that one can have some time for oneself**
- **Help with household tasks**
- **Help with the personal care of the elderly person, such as washing and bathing**
- **Help with shopping**
- **Help with transport**

- **Financial assistance**
- **Information on financial, medical, and other matters**
- **Guidance and advice with difficult decisions**
- **Guidance with regard to looking after the elderly person**
- **Someone who will listen**
- **Someone with whom you can share the joys and frustrations of caregiving**

What do I need?

Look over the two lists and see whom you can ask to give you the different kinds of help you need. Think about how you can ask for that help, and how you can let others know what sources of support they are, or can be, for you.

It may be useful to regularly bring family members together to talk about the needs of the elderly person, the kind of care involved, and your needs as the primary carer. The family could then explore together how the tasks of caregiving might be shared out.

USE WHATEVER SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE

While the support of family, friends, and neighbours is vital in making the carer's task manageable, they cannot always provide all

the help that is needed. Sometimes the carer needs the specialised skills and expertise available through formal supports such as medical care, legal or social services.

INVOLVING OTHERS

You may find yourself having mixed feelings about involving 'outsiders' in the care of the elderly person. You may be pessimistic about the help they can provide, or you may feel guilty about strangers taking over some caregiving tasks.

It is useful to remember, however, that these services can strengthen your ability to look after the elderly person:

- **BY PROVIDING YOU WITH SPECIALISED-HELP**
- **BY GIVING YOU MORE TIME FOR YOURSELF**
- **BY REDUCING THE STRESS YOU EXPERIENCE IN CARING**
- **BY INCREASING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE ELDERLY PERSON IN YOUR CARE**

The following is a list of services which could be of use to you. Check which ones are available in your area.

Service

	Avail- able	Not Avail- able	Do Not Know
•Home help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•Meals-on-wheels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•Public health nurse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Service

k.

	Avail- able	Not Avail- able	Do Not Know
• Occupational therapist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Chiropodist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Social worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Home alteration or modifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Medical aids (e.g. walking frames)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Laundry service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Financial allowances payable to carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Financial allowances payable to the elderly person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Travel assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Hospital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Service

	Avail- able	Not Avail- able	Do Not Know
• Nursing homes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Respite services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Day-care centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Long-term care facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Clubs/societies/ recreation programmes for the elderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Support or self-help group for carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Crime prevention programme (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Legal services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explore what formal supports are available in your area. Talk to your doctor, public health nurse, or social worker about local community services that may be helpful to

you. Find out from them about eligibility requirements and how to make applications. If there is a support group in your area, they may be able to give you the information you require.

TACKLING PROBLEMS

Your life as a caregiver is more likely to be easier if you learn to tackle the problems that arise in a systematic manner. Some of the steps involved in effective problem-solving are outlined below. Take some problem that you are currently experiencing and write down how you could take steps to help solve this problem.

PROBLEM: Write down what the problem is and decide what you are going to do.

EXAMPLE: *"I have a terrible pain in my back. I am in pain all the time and have to be careful."*

POSSIBLE ACTION: Go to the doctor.

Well, not really. You see, the real problem is: *"I find it impossible to lift my mother out of bed to let her go to the toilet and to get dressed."*

DEFINE WHAT THE REAL PROBLEM IS

*"The **real** problem here is that I found I cannot lift my mother out of bed. What can I do?"*

THINK OF DIFFERENT WAYS OF TACKLING THE PROBLEM

"Ask my neighbour? Ask my GP?"

THINK AGAIN: WOULD THESE SOLUTIONS WORK?

"They are really no help, as I need to do it at odd times. If only I knew the way to do it. The public health nurse does it so easily."

PUT PLAN INTO ACTION

"I know! I'll ask her to show me how to lift my mother without injuring myself."

I should see my GP also, to make sure my back is O.K."

MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR ACTION

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOU AND THE ELDERLY PERSON

The kind of communication between you and the elderly person in your care will greatly affect the relationship between you.

Sometimes we have feelings and hide them because we think that it is better not to let others know about them. This can happen, especially with people very close to us and with whom we are emotionally involved.

Be careful about hiding your feelings. It is very good to share your feelings with others as well as with the elderly person you are looking after.

Answer these questions for yourself:

- Do you often feel taken for granted by the elderly person?

WILL TELL THEM

Yes

No

Yes

No

- Do you feel you are sometimes being emotionally blackmailed by the elderly person?

WILL TELL THEM

Yes

No

Yes

No

- Do you feel sometimes you are being manipulated by the elderly person?

WILL TELL THEM

Yes

No

Yes

No

- Do you feel you need to discuss your financial situation because you have financial worries?

WILL TELL THEM

Yes

No

Yes

No

If your answer is "YES" to any of the above, you need to think about yourself and how these feelings are dragging you down. For your own sake, and that of the elderly person, you need to work out a way of handling these types of situations and feelings. You need to find a way of letting the elderly person know what your feelings are. Ask the advice of a third party about this if necessary.

You may find the following guidelines useful in improving communications between you and the person for whom you are caring.

- Show that you are listening by, for example, looking directly at the person and by responding to him/her. *Really listen.*

- Check with the person that the message you are getting is the one he/she intended to send.
- Pay attention to non-verbal clues, such as the elderly person's tone of voice, facial expression, gestures, the way he/she is sitting.
- Look for hidden meanings. Maybe he/she is trying to tell you something in a round-about way.
- Let the other person know that you empathize with what he/she is feeling.
- Encourage the elderly person. Assure him/her you want to talk or listen.
- Speak distinctly, keeping your hands or objects such as books or cigarettes away from your mouth.
- Talk in a quiet place.
- Repeat what you have said, using different words which have the same meaning.
- Talk directly to the elderly person, face-to-face.
- Take your time, presenting one thought at a time.
- Avoid incomplete messages.
- Use tone of voice, facial expression and gestures, to make your message as clear as possible.
- Watch out that you are not giving one message with your words and another with your body language.
- Let the elderly person know how you feel, using "messages". For example: "*I feel in good form*", or "*I don't care for that, very much*".

- Take account of the fact that there may be differences in experience and attitudes between you and the elderly person.
- Do not talk-down to the elderly person. Be attentive and honest with him/her and with yourself.
- Often elderly people tell stories about events and people in the past. It can be hard to sit and listen to the same stories over and over. It may help to remember that these stories or "life-review" have an important function for the elderly person. They help the person to find meaning and purpose in life and to establish a sense of continuity between the past and present. They may also help him/her to resolve something in the past, or to come to some conclusion about events. It may help, also, to find someone else (a friend, for example) to sit and listen to the elderly person occasionally.

WHAT ABOUT INSTITUTIONAL CARE?

You may wish to consider whether the elderly person may need to go into care for a short stay to enable you to get a break. Sometimes, the decision whether or not the elderly person should be placed in institutional care, be it long-term or short-term, is the most difficult that has to be faced by the caregiver, the elderly person, and others involved. The support services available may no longer be sufficient to ensure the safety and well-being of the elderly person, or you, the carer, may no longer be able to carry on through illness or exhaustion.

The following guidelines may help in making your decisions:

- **Consult with the elderly person, family members, and your doctor or public health nurse in developing a plan for the best care of the person.**
- **Take note of those areas where the elderly person can look after him/herself, and where he/she is dependent on others.**

- **Take note of the areas where you can provide adequate care, and areas that you cannot cope with.**
- **Explore all the support services available, and see whether there are areas of care still not being catered for.**
- **For further advice and information, contact your health board, talk to your doctor and/or your local public health nurse.**
- **Check out different kinds of institutional care available: short-term, long-term, day-care centres.**
- **Use all available information, including The National Council for the Elderly's Fact Sheets to help in making your decision.**
- **Decide with the elderly person what is to be done with household articles, furniture, and personal articles.**
- **Decide how financial matters are to be handled. You may need to get advice on such matters as "power of attorney".**
- **Try to ensure that the elderly person still remains part of family life as much as possible.**
- **The need for institutional care, whether short- or long-term, should be periodically re-evaluated.**

This Fact Sheet has described different needs which you as a carer are likely to be experiencing, and has made suggestions for how you might set about satisfying those needs.

Looking after yourself is vital not only for you personally but also for the person who is depending on you for care.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF?

Think over the different issues raised in the Fact Sheet. Use the following pages to describe what action you can take now in relation to each issue.

What have you decided to do?

- Adopt a positive approach

- Take time for yourself

- Are you eating properly?

- Have you a means of relaxation?

- Are you taking exercise?

- What causes you stress?

- Treat yourself

- Pay attention to your feelings

- Keep up social contacts

- Find support for yourself

- What about institutional care?

USEFUL ADDRESSES

The National Council for the Elderly, Corrigan House, Fenian St., Dublin 2. Telephone: (01) 6766484/5. The National Council for the Elderly is an advisory body to the Minister for Health on matters concerning the elderly.

The Carers' Association, St. Mary's Community Centre, Richmond Hill, Dublin 6. Telephone: (01) 4974498. The Carers' Association provides support and information for carers all over Ireland.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, St. John of God Hospital, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin. Telephone: (01) 2881282. The Alzheimer Society of Ireland provides a range of support services for carers of the elderly mentally infirm all over Ireland.

Friends of the Elderly, 25 Bolton Street, Dublin 1. Telephone: (01) 8731855. Friends of the Elderly provides a social contact support service for elderly people in the Dublin area.

National Social Service Board, 71 Lr. Leeson Street, Dublin 2. Telephone: (01) 6616422. The National Social Service Board publishes Entitlements for the Over 60s and supports over 80 Citizen Information Centres throughout Ireland.

Pension Services Office, College Road, Sligo. Telephone: (01) 8748444 or 071-69800. Applications for a *Carer's Allowance* should be sent to the Pension Services Office.

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Dun Laoghaire: Tivoli Road, Dun Laoghaire. Tel. 2843579.

Dublin South East: Vergemount Hall, Clonskeagh, Dublin 6. Tel. 2698222.

Dublin South Central: Carnegie Buildings, 21/25 Lord Edward St.,
Dublin 2. Tel. 6792611.

Dublin South West: 57 Old County Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12.
Tel. 4542511.

Dublin West: The Lodge, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot,
Dublin 10. Tel. 6268101.

Dublin North West: Rathdown Road, Upr Grangegorman, Dublin 7.
Tel. 8680444.

Dublin North Central: Aras Daimhin, Jones's Road, Dublin 3.
Tel. 8731777.

Dublin North: Cromcastle Road, Coolock, Dublin 5.
Tel. 8476122.

Kildare: Poplar House, Poplar Square, Naas. Tel. (045) 76001.

Wicklow: Glenside Road, Wicklow. Tel. (0404) 68400.

MIDLAND HEALTH BOARD

Laois: Health Centre, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. Tel. (0502) 21135.

Offaly: Health Centre, Arden Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Tel. (0506) 41301.

Longford: County Clinic, Longford, Co. Longford.
Tel. (043) 46211.

Westmeath: Health Centre, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
Tel. (044) 40221.

MID-WESTERN HEALTH BOARD

Limerick: 31/33 Catherine Street, Limerick. Tel. (061) 316655.

Tipperary North: Kenyon Street, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.
Tel. (067) 31212, 31229, 31379.

Clare: County Clinic, Bindon Street, Ennis, Co. Clare.
Tel. (065) 28525.

NORTH EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Meath: County Clinic, Navan, Co Meath. Tel. (046) 21595.

Louth: Community Care Centre, Dublin Road, Dundalk,
Co. Louth. Tel. (042) 32287.

Cavan: Lisdarn, Cavan. Tel. (049) 61822.

Monaghan: Roosky, Co. Monaghan. Tel. (047) 81333.

NORTH WESTERN HEALTH BOARD

Sligo: Health Centre, Cleeveragh Road, Sligo and
Markievicz House, Sligo. Tel. (071) 60222 (both).

Leitrim: Community Care Offices, Leitrim Road,
Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim. Tel. (078) 20308.

Donegal: Isaac Butt Building, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal.
Tel. (074) 31391/6.

SOUTH EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Carlow: Dublin Road, Carlow. Tel. (0503) 31804, 31691.

Kilkenny: County Clinic, James' Green, Kilkenny.
Tel. (056) 21208, 52208.

Tipperary South: County Clinic, Western Road, Clonmel,
Co. Tipperary. Tel. (052) 22011.

Waterford: S.E.H.B. Offices, 32 The Mall, Waterford.
Tel. (051) 76111.

Wexford: County Clinic, Grogan's Road, Wexford.
Tel. (053) 23522.

SOUTHERN HEALTH BOARD

Cork : Abbeycourt House, George's Quay, Cork. Tel. (021) 965511.

Mallow: Gould's Hill House, Mallow, Co. Cork.
Tel. (022) 22220.

West Cork: Community Care Centre, Skibbereen, Co. Cork.
Tel. (028) 21722.

Kerry: 19 Denny Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry. Tel. (066) 21566.

WESTERN HEALTH BOARD

Galway: Community Care Offices, Newcastle Road, Galway.
Tel. (091) 23122, 23115.

Mayo: County Clinic, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. Tel. (094) 22333.

Roscommon: Community Care Offices, Roscommon.
Tel. (0903) 26518, 26604, 26665.

HINTS FROM A CARER

1. I am an amateur artist and I find this pastime an enormous boon. Painting can take you out of yourself and make you completely forget about everything but the picture you are creating. My art has kept me sane, and I can sell my pictures too. So, get going at something you are good at: painting, knitting, embroidery, furniture restoring, anything which can be done from home. The benefits are endless.
2. Keep in touch with friends. Invite them over for coffee. They will show interest in whatever craft or activity you are doing. Become involved with your local Residents' Association. You could even hold their meetings in your house. Do home-typing for local organisations. Join a political party and, even though you may not be able to attend branch meetings, you can do a little local canvassing or address envelopes. Keep in touch with members and your neighbours. In other words, keep your name in circulation before a wide range of people. Don't drop out of the social scene.
3. Buy or borrow all the newspapers and magazines you can and keep up-to-date with the latest news, events, new shops opening, fashions, social trends.
4. Treat yourself to something small every day: a bar of chocolate maybe, or a paperback book, perhaps. Reward yourself. This will give you something to look forward to and will help lift your spirits.
5. Become a bookworm! Use your local library to the full and read endlessly different authors and different styles of books. Knowledge is a powerful source of pleasure and entertainment. Catch the reading habit.

£1.00

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