

Carers - specialist services

There are a number of programs which support and assist carers. There are services specifically for carers of people with a mental illness, for carers of people with a disability, and for carers of older people. Others services are for all carers. Regional Carer Support and Respite Services can help you link into both types of services.

Self-help services provide contact and support

Talking to other carers about their experiences can be a good way to relieve stress. It's also a way to swap information and get tips about looking after yourself and the person you care for. Information and education can also be useful. Mutual support and self-help services offer these types of opportunities.

Respite care gives carers a break

Planned respite gives carers a break and provides them with opportunities to pursue other activities and interests. Respite care can be provided in an emergency - for example, if the carer will be away unexpectedly. It can also be planned at regular intervals, provided in the home, and even give a carer a bigger break, like a five day adventure camp.

Life skills for people with a mental illness

Psychiatric disability rehabilitation and support services, such as day programs and home-based outreach, assist people with a mental illness to develop social and living skills. These skills help to provide stability and independence. Carers also get a break while the consumer participates.

Carer Support Program

Carers of clients of the public mental health system are eligible to apply for assistance through the Carer Support Program. The program provides flexible funding to enable highly individualised support.

Network for carers of people with a disability

The Network is the Victorian peak body of organisations and individuals that support carers of people with a mental illness. It comprises

- Carers or former carers linked with carer groups
- Representatives of statewide carer organisations with a significant carer focus
- Workers from carer support programs

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Your local community mental health service
- Victorian Carers Resource Centre - Tel. 1800 242 636
- The Network for carers website

Things to remember

- Mental illness affects families and carers
- Support and assistance is available.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

Department of Health - Aged Care

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