
When a caring role changes

Summary

- There will be times during your care role when your circumstances change (either temporarily or permanently) and you will have to reassess the situation.
 - Options for temporary change include respite care and outreach support.
 - If you need to make a permanent change, there are residential care options for older people and accommodation and support options for people with a disability or a mental illness
 - It is okay to acknowledge that the care relationship is not working out or that you need a change. You can talk with someone or get free counselling if you feel you need some extra emotional help.
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There will be times during your role as a carer when you will need to reassess your care role. This could be a temporary situation – you might have to go into hospital or your work situation might change. Or it might mean a longer-term change. Perhaps the circumstances of the person you are caring for changes – their health might deteriorate, there might be conflict or the care relationship might not be working out for other reasons.

It is okay to acknowledge that the care relationship is not working out or that you need a change. You might need to focus on your own needs for a while.

As a first step, you might consider getting extra support from others who are currently helping with your care role. These 'secondary carers' might be family, friends or professional carers. You might even ask one of these secondary carers to take on the primary care role temporarily or as an ongoing arrangement.

Respite care

For a carer, respite provides time away from the care situation. For the person you care for, respite can offer a change of scenery that may include fun activities, group outings, individual support, camps and holiday programs.

If you are the main carer for a person who has a disability or a severe mental or physical condition, you can contact the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222 to access respite care or your local Department of Health & Human Services Disability Intake and Response Service on 1800 783 783.

Respite is also available for older people. Contact **Carers Victoria** on 1800 242 636 to find out what respite and support is available.

Residential care options

There are a number of reasons why you might need to give up your care role permanently. Your health might not allow you to continue your care role or the health of the person you care for might deteriorate to a point where they need ongoing access to nursing care.

If you feel you need to give up your carer role permanently and there are no other family members or friends who can take over, you might need to look at the person moving into residential care.

For a younger person with a disability, the Department of Health & Human Services Disability Intake and Response Service can give information on what care options may be available. This may include supporting your son or daughter to live in their own home or in a shared supported accommodation service. For more information contact your regional Disability Intake and Response Service on 1800 783 783.

If the person you care for is an older person with care needs, you could consider residential care. To receive a place in residential aged care, you first need to contact the **Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS)**. ACAS will

send a healthcare professional to assess the person's needs, decide if they are eligible, and then provide approval for their place. Once the person has been advised that they are eligible, you can start looking for a residential care place. To start this process, and for more information, contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 or visit the **My Aged Care** website.

Looking after yourself

If the care situation you are in is not working out, you might want to consider talking to someone about it.

Carers Victoria provides up to six free counselling sessions for carers who are finding their care role difficult. Visit the **Carers Victoria** website for more information or call 1800 242 636.

Other options for support include the following:

- **Your local doctor** can help with advice and refer you to a counsellor if necessary. Your doctor will also be able to keep an eye on your general health and wellbeing and answer questions about the condition of the person you care for.
- **Support groups** are a great way to meet people in a similar situation to you. They can offer friendly advice and make suggestions for ways to take care of yourself while caring for someone else. Support groups can be online or meeting in person.
- **Websites** such as **Carers Australia** provide information and support.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Carers Victoria, call 1800 242 636
- Disability Intake and Response Service, call 1800 783 783
- My Aged Care, call 1800 200 422

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

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