

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Carers

- * **Learn** as much as possible about your relative or friend's illness or disability
Understanding the needs and behaviours of the person you are supporting is important. Get to understand their medications and what to do in an emergency. Knowing what behaviours are a symptom of the illness/disability will help you to not take things personally.
- * **Share the care** with friends and community services
Caring is often more than a one person job. Don't wear yourself out doing everything yourself. Carers who feel most in control of their caring situation have the most assistance from others. Community services are there to help you to coordinate the care.
- * Look after your **own physical and mental health**
You can't look after someone if your own health is poor. Try to get regular rest, exercise and eat healthy meals. Take time out to relax and have a life of your own. Ensure you have your own hobby or interest.
- * Get as much **information** as you can on all the types of assistance available **and use them**
Many services are available in the community to help you both for the person you are caring for and yourself. Ensure you get all the financial benefits you are entitled to through Centrelink and information from the MDS Ltd Information and Referral Service 1800 683 232
- * Attend to **your emotions** and talk to professionals if necessary
It's normal to feel angry, guilty, frustrated, sad, worry and hurt. Remember you are not alone and many other carers feel the same way. Contact a local support group to overcome isolation or contact a counsellor to help you sort out your options.
- * Be **assertive**
If you need help don't be afraid to ask for it. If you have trouble getting contact a local advocacy group like Families in Partnership 4648 1593 or Carers NSW. You have the right to complain if services do not provide assistance of high quality or inappropriately refuse to assist you.
- * **Plan** for the future
Don't wait until the last minute to organise things. Remember to have wills and power of attorney up to-date, including your own. Set out an Emergency Care Plan to give you peace of mind so they don't have to be done at a more stressful time. Services are available to help plan for your future and for the person you are caring for.



**Contact your nearest Carers Resource Centre
by phoning 1800 242 636**