



Your trusted voice in mental health

A Carer's Charter of Resilience

1. Being a carer is a valued and

important role/occupation Caring for another requires highly skilled communication, empathy, negotiation, patience, time management and personal and emotional strength. Society places high value on relationships and what matters most is the connection we have with each other. Some carers see their role as carer as their primary role.

2. Being a carer doesn't define the totality of our lives

All people take on roles in life- father, mother, child, worker, driver, student, teacher, mentor, family member, friend however not just one role is used to define who we are.

3. We will make time for ourselves as a priority

If we are to give of ourselves to others we need to ensure that we are refreshed and nourished.

4. We will nurture the other (non-carer) aspects of our lives including other relationships, leisure pursuits, volunteering, work and career...

Knowing what we like to do and be is part of nurturing ourselves.

5. We will speak up for our own needs and the needs of those for whom we care

Finding our voice and speaking up for ourselves is good practice for when we need to advocate for and with those for whom we care. Saying 'I want or don't want' doesn't always come easy and practising with friends or family is a good start.

6. We are a significant and essential part of the care-team of those we care for and our voice is as important as the other voices

As carers we see and hear aspects of the lives of those of whom we care that others don't always get to see or hear. Our knowledge, our care and our love is just as important as the expertise and dedication of others providing support. We matter and what we know matters!

7. We will nurture our own wellbeing by embracing the joys and challenges of caring, by celebrating small successes, by looking for opportunities to be grateful and by supporting each other

Caring brings many highs and lows and there are times when we feel we are doing it all alone. Sitting alongside others in the same boat can bring enormous support and help. Sharing with loved ones about the small steps forward can mean the difference between walking away from it all and hanging in there.

8. When we are struggling to cope we will ask for and accept help from both professionals and other supports

Reaching out to others with all its risks helps us to better understand not only ourselves but may also bring fresh insight to our situation.

9. We will retain our sense of humour

What's important is a smile, a giggle, a broad grin. Trying to maintain our sense of fun is hard at times and we can't always see the brighter side of things but when we do something changes.

10. We have determination that life has hope and meaning

The caring role can sometimes consume us, especially when things are not working out the way we had hoped. What keeps us determined to keep on caring is our capacity to tap into hope. We know deep down that our hope for the best outcome is what keeps us going.

A Mental Health Carer is someone who provides unpaid physical, practical or emotional support to a family member, friend, neighbour or colleague with mental ill health.

This Carers Resilience Charter was developed in Mental Health Week October 2016 with the support of mental health carers who attended workshops in Hobart and Launceston. Thank you to each of you for sharing, reflecting and contributing to the development of the Charter.