



*WHO CARES  
for the  
CARER?*

Caring for the Carers

## Caring for the Carer.

A number of us find ourselves as carers of others. In many cases, we care for a loved one who needs such care on an ongoing basis. We can do so without question because we love them, and they need care and support. We may be caring for a child, an elderly adult, a person with disabilities or someone who may be chronically unwell.

We set our goal and focus as to meeting the needs of the person we are caring for. In most cases there is no choice about being a carer. Over 80% of people who care long term for others do so without having had any prior expectancy that they would suddenly find themselves in such a position. Even for those who do have prior knowledge of having to be in such a role, like knowing the inevitability of a parent growing older and needing care, experience the same impact on their lives as those who were unprepared. It is generally done out of a strong sense of love and affection for the person who needs our care.

Over time being a carer on an ongoing basis can take a toll on the quality of life of the carer. It can have an impact physically, emotionally as well as affecting the other relationships the carer has with their family and friends.

Your resilience can take you a long way in looking after another but oftentimes the last person we care for becomes ourselves. Our health can deteriorate and we may be left in a place of chronic fatigue. This aspect alone can have an impact on the carer's relationship with the other people in their lives. The fun we have had in our lives before we had to step into the role of a carer can quickly go and our availability to our social life can become greatly diminished. Contact with friends can be less and less over time and we may lose contact with friends altogether. We can experience a range of emotions we haven't felt before becoming a carer.

You may feel some of the following;

Trapped.

Frustrated.

Alone.

Short-tempered.

Cheated.

Anger.

Misunderstood.

Annoyed.

Withdrawn.

Unhappy.

Hopeless.

Hearth broke.

Guilt.

Miserable.

Depression.

Anxiety.

Then there is the physical toll that our circumstances may have on us such as carers. Common to all carers on a long-term base is the fact that it has a toll on the carer, not only emotionally but is played out in the body, physically. The following list is a brief list of what many carers suffer from, over time.

Lack of self-care.

Migraine.

Back Ache.

High blood pressure.

Deterioration of pre-existing health conditions.

Effects of being unable to exercise.

Fatigue.

Putting off your own medical care.

There are also practical implications that we may experience. Some people have to cease working to care for a loved one. Financial pressure can become the norm. For those who juggle working and caring report that they are considerably more stressed at work and advancement in their position may be lost.

As you can see the cost of caring can be immense on the person who finds themselves in the position of being a carer, regardless of it being expected or not. Also, what has been outlined so far is by no means an exhaustive list of the effect's carers can be impacted by.

This is an added problem, not in detailing all the difficulties carers go through, but because each carer has their own particular set of circumstances that can leave them feeling isolated and alone in their unique distress. You can be left feeling very much misunderstood. One carer experience compared to another can be vastly different.

## Who cares for the carer?

The N.H.S. in England has conducted studies which show that in most cases the carer is not supported or given the care that they need themselves. Nor can they even give it to themselves.

Essentially, we find that here in Ireland we are no different when it comes to carer support. Over time a carer can find themselves in a state of collapse.

It is essential that a carer not only supports the person they care for but that they also get support for themselves. Coaching and Counselling can be effective ways to have support not only emotionally and mentally but also as a means of devising strategies which support the carer in carrying out their role in a more effective way while caring for themselves as well.

We use the three-stage model of effective outcome in both Coaching and Counselling in assisting our clients in moving forward in an empowering way as they care for a loved one.

## THREE STAGE MODEL

### *Cork Counselling Clinic*

01

#### Exploration

The client explores the distressing issues in detail to bring clarity.

02

#### New Understanding

The client uses their new found clarity to come to a fuller understanding.

03

#### Taking Action

Once fully understood the client is empowered to take meaningful action to resolve their difficulties.



To give yourself one hour a week is even a step in self-care which allows you the space to explore the options that can support you in your position as a carer. You will be understood, heard and treated with compassion in the distress that you are facing. This in turn allows you to free up more resources in yourself too, not only look after the one you care for, but also for your own self-care.

You can contact the Cork Counselling Clinic for Counselling, Coaching or Psychotherapy for to gain support and understanding in your particular circumstances. We offer a 15-minute phone consultation to discuss your needs and determine which approach may provide the best outcome for you.

We look forward to being of support to you and wish you well in your journey.

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