

FAMILIES AND CARERS AS PARTNERS IN DEMENTIA CARE.

Integrated Admiral Nurse Service

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▶ *“A carer is anyone... who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid...”*

(NHS England, 2022)

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WHAT IS A CARER?

UNDERSTANDING THE WORD... "CARER"

- The majority of care for people with dementia is undertaken by their family as carers.
- The label 'carer' seems to imply that the person has willingly chosen this role; what often happens is that people fall into the role without choosing it.

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VALUING CARERS

Carers can be a valuable source of information. They will be able to fill you in on information from a person's past: this may be a critical piece of the puzzle in coming to understand a person's behaviour and their needs much better.

Through your communication you can show carers that you respect their knowledge, and that you want to listen to their views. Working together, will give you more satisfaction and will also be of comfort to the carer.

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WHERE CAN I FIND WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

- What support is out there?
- Where can you find out if you don't know?

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SUPPORTING CARERS TO MAINTAIN THEIR HEALTH AND INTERESTS

Ask the carer, "How are you?" "What do you think?" "How does this feel?" or "How does it look to you?" and listen to what they say. You can learn a lot about a person from their carer, and carers can learn a lot from you too.

It is vital that carers keep themselves well. Ask them what you can do to help them do that; but always promote their independence for their own sense of wellbeing.

A story from Hannah, Caring through Lockdown. <https://vimeo.com/547451379>

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**Lives
on Hold**

I gave up work at Christmas
2019

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SCENARIO:

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MR BROWN IS ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL FOLLOWING A FALL AT HOME. HE HAS VASCULAR DEMENTIA AND PRESENTS IN ED AS CHALLENGING AND AGITATED.

What we will do is think about the triadic relationship between the carer, the patient with dementia, and the healthcare professionals; why is this so important?

- Group 1: The patients views and feelings- Why is he presenting this way, what support do you think he needs?
- Group 2: The professionals views and feelings- How would they manage this situation, what actions might they take for the carer and patient; what other priorities might affect this?
- Group 3: The carers views and feelings- How may they feel at this time? How can the carer be supported in this situation? Why is it important to think about the carer at this time?

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CARING AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Like any condition, dementia does not discriminate and will affect people from all cultures and backgrounds.

Issues of diversity may have an impact on how people experience dementia.

This is including the acceptance of the condition within their family or community.

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BE AWARE OF THE IMPACT ON YOUNGER CARERS AND THEIR CONCERNS

- Many younger people have caring responsibilities for someone with dementia. This may be for a grandparent or for a parent who may have young onset dementia.
- It is important to consider the impact of caring responsibilities on the whole family and understand the needs and concerns that younger carers or members of a household with caring responsibilities may have.

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RECAP: WORK CLOSELY WITH FAMILIES

- Find out what carers think and feel.
- Interpret complex situations accurately.
- Give carers time to share their feelings.

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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING.

- For more information about how to make a referral to our service please email: RCHT.admiralnurse@nhs.net or call: 07823 535934
- Dementia UK Helpline: 0800 888 6678.