



Carers' Society Otago Community House

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Dear Carers,

NEWSLETTER

APRIL/MAY 2013

A few years ago, 10 to be precise, there was an article in the Carers' Society Newsletter about **loneliness**. I thought it was something worth talking about again because it is something we all experience at some stage in our lives so we all know what it feels like. We also know there are ways of overcoming it but sometimes we are trapped by our own thinking habits or by our caring role. There are lots of people around us but we have lost the art of connecting with people through negative self talk. The longer this goes on the more difficult it is to re-connect.

Sometimes, in this self talk, we talk ourselves down and say *no one* would be interested in us. Sometimes we talk ourselves up and say that we would find *nothing of interest* in that person. All of these trails lead to the *do nothing* approach. A life of isolation and often despair.

The truth is that **we can be happy** with our own company but we still need a kind of external stimulation to keep ourselves happy and connected with the world, to feel a part of our community.

There are many reasons why carers may withdraw from connecting. Perhaps the person for whom you are caring behaves unpredictably or says odd things. Perhaps the caring duties wear you down so much that you cannot present yourself or your home in the way you would like. Maybe you have pretended for so long that things are tickety boo, that you find it difficult to face the truth yourself, and then connect truthfully with others. It becomes easier not to and on it goes.

Carers, all the stresses and strains of your role, your feelings of exhaustion, guilt, and worry are made worse by not feeling able to share them. Other carers do understand. Social contact does help. Time out to do something you like, an activity, a hobby you share with someone, are all important. Talk to strangers, talk to people on the bus, talk to anyone. The weather, the season, the garden, the price of things. These are all topics affecting everyone and safe conversation starters. This all helps to distract you, lighten the load, and reconnect you with others.

Remember, you are doing this for you, the most important person in your world.

Barbara Horrell, a PhD student from Massey University, is focussing the next stage of her research on how the caring role prevents carers from doing things they would like to do for themselves and how they feel about their role. If you are currently caring for someone over the age of 65 and would be interested in taking part in the research by talking to Barbara once a week for up to six weeks please contact her on **0800 4371436** or email Barbara at barbarahorrell@gmail.com.

Payment for Carers update from Carers NZ

As many of you are aware, the Government is considering payment options for family carers who support disabled adult children. This is in response to successive court decisions finding that to not pay family carers the same as formal workers for the same work is discriminatory. We are unsure of when any official payment announcement will be made, but we will keep you informed of the progress.

Carers take care.....Susan

CARERS' MEETINGS

SOUTH OTAGO CARERS' MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at 7 pm in the Brian Dodds Meeting Room of Clutha Health First. For June, July, August, the meetings are held at 6pm.

2 April—Elder Abuse & Neglect Prevention Service—a talk given by Dawn Howe-Dennison, from Age Concern Otago

7 May—Writing Workshop

4 June—6pm David Horne Slideshow

MILTON

30 April—Afternoon tea at Café Lolas at 2:30 pm. All Milton carers are welcome.

DUNEDIN CARERS' MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month at 1:30 pm in the Alexander McMillan Room, Community House, 301 Moray Place.

11 April—Easter afternoon tea with a talk by Marie Sutherland of Supergrans

9 May—Work and Income will talk about supports for family carers.

NORTH OTAGO CARERS' MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of every other month at 2 pm, in the Weston Community Church

14 May—Pamper afternoon.

CENTRAL OTAGO CARERS' MEETINGS

Meetings are held at 2pm in the new Community House every two months on the first Thursday of the month.

7 April —Work and Income—Annette Harris will talk about entitlements for carers and carees.

6 June— To be announced

YOUNG CARERS' MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of every month from 5:30—7:30pm. Contact Susan or Anneloes for more information 4716204.

DUNEDIN and MOSGIEL WALKING GROUPS

From now on we will start with a coffee. Please be there at 10am if you want to join us for a coffee, or you can get one 'to go' on the walk. We are an inclusive, not a fitness group. We pace ourselves to suit the slowest walker and sometimes break into fast and slow groups.

DUNEDIN—We will meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 10 am.

23 April—We meet at the Stadium Café at the Forsyth Barr Stadium. There is plenty of parking out front.

28 May—We will meet at the Salt Water Pool Café.

MOSGIEL—We meet on the third Friday of every month in the foyer of the Mosgiel Public Library at 10 am. The next two walks are on April 19 and May 17.

Action Plan for Carers

Carers take note

- Ask for help. Get help early—counselling, assistance with caregiving, information.
- Educate yourself about the caree's illness or disability and about the caring role.
- Have an awareness of the losses to come for your caree and for yourself.
- Join a support group early.
- Seek help for the grief you are experiencing and recognize the hidden grief component of your anger, anxiety, guilt or depression.
- Recognize the signs of denial when you say, "I don't need help", "Nothing's wrong", "She's fine today so she must be getting better", "Placement in a rest home is not an option, 'til death do us part", "No we don't need power of attorney", "the doctor must be mistaken".
- Acknowledge your right to feel emotionally off-balance.
- Learn to 'let go' from the start and share your caregiving and your caregiving experiences with others.
- Stop trying to be perfect and forgive yourself for not being perfect. Your world has been turned upside down now that you are a carer. You will probably have to compromise some of your personal standards.
- Take care of yourself physically. Have regular checkups for yourself. Get as much rest and respite as possible. Eat balanced meals.
- Take care of yourself emotionally. Give yourself time and space to cry. Don't be afraid to acknowledge your feelings of anger, anxiety, helplessness, guilt, and despair.
- Hang on to your sense of self by keeping up with friends and regular activities as much as possible.
- Take one day at a time, but also plan for the future. Right from the beginning keep an ongoing file with care information. Good planning can include getting an Enduring Power of Attorney, or accessing community care or day programmes early.
- Be kind to yourself and take it easy on yourself. Remember you are experiencing normal reactions to an abnormal situation. You may 'lose it' sometimes because you are human.
- Learn various ways to communicate with your caree if cognitive or language abilities decline. Good communication strategies help avoid frustration.
- Make sure your family doctor is someone who is willing to listen and understands. Never give the short answer when your doctor asks, "Are you coping"?
- Follow the action plan to help avoid carer burnout. You will be no use to your caree if you don't take care of yourself. As they say in the plane, put your oxygen mask on first before you help the person with you.

7 FLU FIGHTING STRATEGIES FOR FAMILY CARERS



If you are a [family carer](#), you can reduce the chances that both you and your loved one will get the dreaded virus.

It's about vigilance and, yes, luck. But

regardless, **tissues and [hand sanitizer](#) need to be your best friends.**

Older people can have weakened immune systems making them susceptible to flu and its complications. Nearly 90 percent of flu deaths and 60 percent of [flu hospitalizations](#) happen to those age 65-plus. And if you, the caregiver, get it, who will step in?

Whether you're in close quarters at work, have an older person live with or visit you, care for an older person in his or her home, or transport someone to medical appointments in your car, there are certain [flu-fighting rules](#) of the road. **They include getting a flu vaccine, washing hands and disinfecting surfaces frequently, and steering clear (if you can) of someone sick.**

A little microbiology 101: People contract the flu from an infected person or [germy surface](#) (a door knob, elevator button, or train or bus pole, for instance). Droplets from the sick person coughing, sneezing or talking can travel to your mouth or nose.

Here's what you need to know:

1. Besides getting the flu vaccine, wash your hands and the care recipient's hands often (after sneezing, handling a tissue, being in close contact with others) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Act like Lady Macbeth, the compulsive hand washer. No soap? Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer; carry a spare in your bag and car.
2. You're not necessarily home free if you've had a [flu shot](#). In North America, this year's flu vaccine is 62 percent effective. You can get the shot and still come down with the flu. Still, it's a critical first line of defence.
3. If you're the cougher or sneezer, do it into a [tissue](#) (not your hand, and if so wash immediately) and throw it out immediately.
4. Take a break from handshaking and sharing drinks or food. The flu outbreak is so worrisome that the [Catholic Archdiocese of Boston](#) has asked priests not to share communion wine or touch congregants' hands or tongue and for worshippers not to shake hands.
5. If you have the flu or a bad cold, wear a drug store or doctor's office mask and don't go out until 24 hours after the fever is gone. If you're caring for someone sick, ditto.
6. Keep those hand wipes handy. Whip them out wherever someone with a cold, cough or flu has been — and use them on car door handles, banisters, kitchen counters, house or office doorknobs, or exercise equipment. Also use them at stores that require communal pens for credit card payments, or other public places.
7. If your parent, spouse or friend is in a [health care facility](#), ask what they're doing to contain any viral outbreaks.

RECIPES and COOKING TIPS

Simple salad recipes from the 4 Ingredients Cookbook in the Jennie Clegg Library

Caramalized Pear and Rocket Salad

Serves 6

6 pears sliced
200gm baby rocket salad mix
8 Tbsp grated parmesan
3 Tbsp balsamic vinegar

In a non stick frying pan over a medium heat add sliced pear. The natural juices of the pear will release. Cook 'til soft and slightly browned. Set aside to cool.

In a bowl place the rocket and sprinkle with parmesan.

Top with warm pear and serve drizzled with balsamic vinegar.

Cauliflower and Sesame Seed Salad

Serves 4-6

3 Tbsp sesame seeds
1/2 raw cauliflower broken into small florets
2 Tbsp mayonnaise

Toast sesame seeds over dry heat for 2 minutes or until golden brown.

Coat cauliflower and half of sesame seeds with mayonnaise.

Toss and chill.

Serve sprinkled with remaining sesame seeds.

Coconut Salad

Serves 4

2 cups shaved coconut
3 cups peeled and diced kumara
2 cups diced pumpkin
1/2 cup fresh coriander
salt and pepper to taste

Lightly roast kumara and pumpkin pieces.

Toast coconut dry until golden brown.

Mix all the ingredients in a large bowl and serve.

Avocado Salsa

Serves 4

2 ripe avocado
1/2 red onion finely diced
1/2 cup fresh coriander chopped
2 Tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice

Peel and dice avocado into 1 cm cubes

Add onion and coriander

Drizzle with lemon juice to taste and season as desired.



Smile A While



A local business was looking for office help and put up a sign saying: "HELP WANTED. Must be able to type, must be good with a computer and must be bilingual. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer."

A short time afterwards, a golden retriever dog trotted up to the window, saw the sign and went inside. He looked at the receptionist and wagged his tail, then walked over to the sign, looked at it and whined. Getting the idea, the receptionist got the office manager. The office manager looked at the dog and was surprised, to say the least. However, the dog looked determined, so he led him into the office. Inside, the dog jumped up on the chair and stared at the manager.

The manager said, "I can't hire you. The sign says you have to be able to type."

The dog jumped down, went to the typewriter and proceeded to type out a perfect letter. He took out the page and trotted over to the manager and gave it to him, then jumped back on the chair.

The manager was stunned, but then told the dog, "The sign says you have to be good with a computer."

The dog jumped down again and went to the computer. The dog proceeded to demonstrate his expertise with various programs and produced a sample spreadsheet and database and presented them to the manager. By this time the manager was totally dumbfounded! He looked at the dog and said, "I realize that you are a very intelligent dog and have some interesting abilities. However, I still can't give you the job."

The dog jumped down and went to a copy of the sign and put his paw on the part about being an Equal Opportunity Employer.

The manager said, "Yes, but the sign also says that you have to be bilingual."

The dog looked at him and said, "Meow."

RANDOM COMMENTS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGY

"Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons."

- Popular Mechanics, forecasting the relentless march of science, 1949

"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."

- Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943

"I have traveled the length and breadth of this country and talked with the best people, and I can assure you that data processing is a fad that won't last out the year."

- The editor in charge of business books for Prentice Hall, 1957

"But what... is it good for?"

- Engineer at the Advanced Computing Systems Division of IBM, 1968, commenting on the microchip.

"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home."

- Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977

"640K ought to be enough for anybody."

- Bill Gates, 1981

"The 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication.

The device is inherently of no value to us."

- Western Union internal memo, 1876.



OTEMATATA COTTAGE FOR CARERS

Thanks to a very generous offer, Carers' Society Otago has the use of this four bedroom cottage in Otematata for carer members who need a break. The cottage sleeps ten and is available, when the owner is not using it, for a nominal fee for a weekend or a week long break. As with most cottages there are a few do's and do not's but the main aim is to give carers a bit of a holiday while their caree is in respite, or for a break away with their caree. Carers, if you are interested please give Susan or Anneloes a ring on (03) 471 6204.

The Jennie Clegg Lending Library

Here are some new titles. Come into the Carers' Lounge and have a browse with a cuppa and a cookie.

Food for Thought: Food and Mood—This is a collection of recipes by the 'Creative Group' of the Community Day Programmes of the Otago District Health Board as was.

Moving to the Center of the Bed—by Sheila Weinstein. This book addresses the loss of self as a carer and grief at the loss of the caree.

The Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict—by the Arbinger Institute. A practical and intriguing approach to maximizing collaboration and performance.

CARERS' SOCIETY BULLETIN BOARD

In the Carers' Lounge we have two Bulletin Boards. They are worth having a look at because there are lots of current news items that affect carers, information from Carers New Zealand, information on current courses and education sessions and copies of relevant pamphlets such as the Buddy Programme and How to claim Carer Support. Definitely worth a look see.



Some of our fabulous Volunteers help with the Newsletter mailout

**Do join us in the Carers' Lounge for a cuppa and
a chat, a bit of quiet time, or to explore our
library**

**Up the stairs or take the elevator
Community House
301 Moray Place
Dunedin**

Carers' Society Otago gratefully acknowledges the support of:

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| Presbyterian Support Otago | The Ministry of Health | United Way |
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