



Hello Carers,

Happy New Year to you all. We are busy planning 2017 after a great break. After reading some of your feedback from the 2015/2016 Satisfaction Survey we have decided to use some of our Carers' Meetings for Clinics. The Clinics will be held in the usual place and at the same time as the regular meeting and both Susan and I will be there. For anyone who wants to raise a concern or have a private chat with one of us please make an appointment beforehand. The rest of the time will be a social catch-up for all carers.

Have a look on Page 2 of this Newsletter to find out about the next Carers' Meeting in your area.

Another issue I would like to raise is how often we hear carers say, "If only I had known that was available". I think what carers need most is to recognise their own needs. Only if you know what you need can you ask for it. These are very important steps in the process toward better physical and psychological health for you. I often say to new carers that it is like they tell you in the airplane. "Take the oxygen for yourself first before you tend to someone else". When your needs are taken care of, the person you care for will benefit too.

Often attitudes and beliefs form barriers that stand in the way of caring for yourself. Let's have a look at some of these barriers:

- I feel selfish if I put my needs first.
- I feel frightened to think of my own needs? Why?
- I have trouble asking for help. I feel inadequate if I ask for help.
- I have to prove that I deserve my caree's love and therefore I do too much.

Some misconceptions can get in the way and increase your stress. Thoughts like:

- I am responsible for my caree's health.
- If I don't do it, no one will.
- If I do it right, I will get the love, attention, and respect I deserve.

Identifying your barriers is the start to good self-care. Instead of negative self-talk such as "I never do anything right" or "There's no way I can find the time to exercise", try positive statements such as, "I'm good at giving John a bath" and "I can exercise for 15 minutes today". Remember, your mind believes what you tell it!

Get out your new diary or calendar and start a bit of forward planning. Book respite care for a winter break and take 10 minutes a day for yourself for whatever you'd like to do!

Take care.....Anneloes

TAKE A BREAK TAKE A BREAK TAKE A BREAK TAKE A BREAK TAKE A BREAK

CARERS' MEETINGS 2016

SOUTH OTAGO CARERS' MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the **1st Tuesday of every ALTERNATE MONTH at 6:30 pm** in the Brian Dodds Room of Clutha Health First starting in **MARCH**.

7 March - Social/Clinic. If you need advice or want a private chat book an appointment with Susan or Anneloes! Launch of Carers Week Photo project (see the NEWS page).

MILTON CARERS' GROUP

All Milton carers are welcome to attend the Balclutha meetings. If you would like to be picked up please ring the office on 03 471 6204.

NORTH OTAGO CARERS' GROUP

Meetings are held on the **2nd Tuesday of the months of February, April, August and November** in the Weston Community Church.

14 February - Social/Clinic and Valentine's Day. For help or advice book a private appointment with the Community Workers. Please bring and share some old Valentines! Launch of Carers Week Photo project (see the NEWS page).

CENTRAL OTAGO CARERS' GROUP

Meetings are held at 2pm on the **1st Thursday of the months of February, April, September and November** in the Alexandra Community House.

2 February - Winery visit! We are treated to a private tour of the Shaky Bridge Vinyard and given a small taste as well. We will meet at 2pm at Community House then walk down to the vinyard.

DUNEDIN CARERS' MEETINGS

Meetings are held every month on the **2nd Thursday of the month** beginning in **MARCH** at 1:30 pm in the Alexander McMillan Room, Community House, 301 Moray Place.

9 March - Social and launch of Carers Week Photo project (see the NEWS page).

WALKING GROUP

We meet on the **4th Tuesday of every alternate month**. The walk usually starts with a coffee at 10am. Latecomers can get a coffee to go. All carers welcome. We would like to suggest that walkers meet informally in the intervening months. Please check with the latest Newsletter for the meeting place.

28 February - "From Roundabout to Roundabout". Meet at 10am for a coffee @ Coffee Culture in the old fire station near the Roslyn shops. We will walk from there to the Mornington roundabout.

YOUNG CARERS' GROUP

Meetings are held on the **3rd Thursday of the month, 5:30 – 7pm**. Contact Susan or Anneloes for more information 471 6204. Young Carers will be sent a monthly Newsletter advising of the dates and activities.

NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

Carers Cottage

We were sad to lose the Otematata Cottage as a retreat for Carers, so we have been following up on other possible cribs for a break for carers. The Anglican Diocese has a crib in Kakanui but the charges are quite a bit higher than the Otematata Cottage. If you are interested give us a call and we will send you the details.

Jennie Clegg Library

As you all know funding issues have put a stop to buying new books for our library. We do however have a copy of an article published in the journal Scientific American MIND. It's called "The Caregiver's Dilemma; How to tend to a loved one without losing yourself". If you would like to read it ring us and we'll send you a copy.

Don't forget, out of town carers and Dunedin carers, we can send out library books with a return envelope provided for your convenience! If you want a copy of our library list give us a ring or check out our website.

Carers' Week Photo Project

We have been wanting to do something different for Carers' Week for a while. We have come up with an idea that we hope will interest carers and inspire your participation. On the first meeting of all our Carers' Groups we will launch the Carers' Week Photo Project.

The idea is that we will ask you to take a photo of what caring means to you. The Hospice had a similar project and displayed the results in an exhibition at the Otago Art Society. One woman took a picture from her lounge window of her mailbox. For a time the trip to the mailbox was her only outing of the day.

The deadline to send the photos to us is the 31st of July.

You can send them online in an email or as a hard copy. Together we will collate them onto a poster board during the September meetings to be displayed in your town during Carers' Week, October 9-15. So get snapping!

Your Stories

We would love to hear from you. Just like regular magazines we would like to receive your letters and contributions for our Newsletters. We will choose a winning letter each time to receive a small prize.

It can be a comment, an adventure, a gripe. Anything goes! Please get your contribution in before the 25th of April, in time for the next Newsletter.

You send your email to carerssociety@pcconnect.co.nz or send by mail to Community House, 283/301 Moray Place, Dunedin 9016.

Carers Self Walks

As you all know financial limitations forced us to limit the combined Dunedin/Mosgiel walking group from 10 walks to 5 in February, May, July, September and November. We recognize how good it is mentally, physically and emotionally for carers to get together and have a walk.

Starting this year we will hand out a prepared walk for 2 of the intervening months, in June and October. You will get the date, venue and the time for a coffee and a walk to follow.

JOKES

My Favourite Cartoonist Michael Leunig from Australia. He gave a talk at the Dunedin Fringe Festival last year.

THINGS THAT MATTER.

What are the famous people reading this summer? What are they eating and drinking? Where are they going and what are they doing to relax? What brand of toilet paper are they using? Who cares and what does it matter?

So now to more important and useful information regarding the festive season: information about dogs; information which you could have easily overlooked or forgotten:—



THE LABRADOR IS A GREAT EATING AND DRINKING COMPANION!



The Staffordshire Bull Terrier loves to sing and is an excellent, lively and agreeable conversationalist.



The Fox Terrier is a fabulous dancer; loves a good time and is always last to leave the party. What more can be said? HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Leunig

Give the all-clear signal.
It's not a shark, it's a big
piece of human faeces
with a dorsal fin.



Leunig

RECIPES

We have some good recipe books in our library. I have chosen some recipes from "4 Ingredients; Fast, Fresh & Healthy".

Deepak Chopra wrote a foreword for this book and explains the 4 Golden Rules of Healthy Eating as follows:

1. Pay attention to your appetite and only eat when you are truly hungry.
2. Try and eat each of the 6 following tastes everyday: sweet (Examples: mangoes, melons, bananas, corn, avocados, meat), sour (Examples: all berries, tomatoes, cheese, vinegar), salty (Examples: soy sauce, seaweed, seasalt), pungent (Examples: pepper, chilli, ginger, onion, garlic), bitter (Examples: broccoli, kale, spinach, asparagus, lettuce), and astringent (Examples: green apples, cranberries, beans, lentils, peas, cabbage).
3. Choose food that nourishes your body and emotions.
4. Eat with awareness; set the table, try not to eat in front of the television or while reading a book and use the senses, look at the food, smell it and taste it, chew slowly.

Right, that's enough, let's start cooking!

BREAKFAST

Apricot Oats

- 1/2 cup instant porridge
- 1 1/2 cups of milk
- 4 dried apricots
- 2 tsp golden syrup

Simmer the porridge and milk together in a small saucepan for 4-5 minutes until slightly thickened and smooth, stirring frequently. Stir the golden syrup into the porridge. Pour the mixture into a bowl then sprinkle apricots on top and serve. (serves 1)

LUNCH

Carrot and Ginger Soup

- 2 spring onions, sliced
- 1 tbs freshly grated ginger
- 12 medium carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1 litre vegetable or chicken stock

In a large saucepan, saute the green onions and ginger for about 5 minutes. Add the carrots and saute for a few more minutes. Add the stock and bring to the boil. Turn heat low and simmer for 30 minutes or until the carrots are tender. Transfer the soup to a blender or use a blender stick and puree until smooth. (serves 4)

Optional: Season with seasalt and pepper, cumin and lemon juice to taste. For something really different, add a cup of orange juice and only 3 cups of stock.

Tip: This soup can be made in larger batches and frozen ready for a quick snack at any time.

DINNER

Summer Fish Cakes

- 500g white fish fillets, cooked and flaked
- 4 tbs freshly chopped coriander
- 2 tbs Pad Thai paste
- 2 cups mashed sweet potato (kumara)

Mix all ingredients together and mash. Roll mixture into approximately 10 cakes. Heat a non-stick frying pan and cook both sides till golden brown.

Serve with rice. (serves 4)

EET SMAKELIJK!

DEPRESSION AND CARING

Many people with symptoms of depression don't describe themselves as feeling depressed. Some people don't recognise the symptoms in themselves, while others may have a hard time admitting they feel depressed. It can be embarrassing to talk about. An individual may feel like a failure or that people will judge them. But here is what you need to know: for carers, depression is more common than you might think, and it is a normal response to a difficult situation. It is not unusual for carers to develop mild or more serious depression as a result of the constant demands they face while providing care.

Depression is an extremely complex condition with many research studies underway to pinpoint the cause(s). Known contributing factors include genetic characteristics, hormone levels, environmental triggers, certain medications, the effects of living with a major illness, grief and loss due to the death of a loved one, having experienced physical or emotional abuse, living with someone with serious depression, and other factors. Not everyone will experience the negative feelings that go with depression. But we know that in an effort to provide the best possible care for a family member or friend, carers often sacrifice their own physical and emotional needs. The complex and varied aspects involved with providing care can strain even the most capable person. Feelings of being overwhelmed, agitation, anxiety, distress, pessimism, isolation, exhaustion - and sometimes guilt for having these feelings - can exact a heavy toll.

Everyone has negative thoughts or feelings that come and go over time, but when these feelings become more intense and leave you drained of energy, tearful or irritable towards a loved one, it may well be a warning sign of depression. Concerns about depression arise when the emptiness and crying don't go away, or when those negative feelings are unrelenting.

Unfortunately, feelings of depression are often seen as a sign of weakness (especially in men) rather than a sign that something is out of balance. Comments from others such as "Snap out of it" or "It's all in your head" are not helpful, and reflect a belief that mental health concerns are not real. Ignoring or denying your feelings will not make them go away.

Early attention to symptoms of depression through exercise, a healthy diet, positive support of family and friends, or consultation with a trained health or mental health professional may help to prevent the development of a more serious depression over time.

People experience depression in different ways. Some may feel classic symptoms, like sadness and hopelessness. Others may have signs that might not equate with depression, such as extreme fatigue and irritability. The type and degree of symptoms vary by individual and can change over time. Consider these common signs of depression. Have you experienced any of the following for longer than 2 weeks? If so make an appointment with your doctor.

- Feeling sad, tearful, empty, hopeless
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in sleep
- Feeling tired all the time
- A loss of interest in people and/or activities that once brought you pleasure
- Feeling numb
- Becoming easily agitated or angered
- Feeling that nothing you do is good enough
- Increase in alcohol or drug consumption or excessive time on the internet
- Trouble focusing, thinking or planning
- Neglecting your physical well-being and appearance
- Thoughts of running away, or escaping from the situation
- Thoughts of death or suicide, ideas of how to end your life
- Ongoing physical symptoms like headaches, tummy upsets and chronic back and neck pain

Source: Family Caregiving Alliance website (<https://www.caregiver.org>)

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ASSERTIVE

Being assertive is all about making sure your voice is heard and being able to clearly explain how you feel about something, what you need, or why you feel something should be changed. It means saying 'yes' when you want to and 'no' when you don't agree with something or someone (rather than agreeing to something just to please someone else).

It means taking responsibility for yourself and decisions you make, and sticking to them, even if this provokes conflict; being able to ask for help and support when you need it; being able to say what you think or feel without getting angry; standing up to difficult people and being confident about handling conflict if it occurs. Being assertive will also help you to give and receive feedback, whether it's positive or negative.

Carers often say they struggle to get support and understanding from family and friends. Others say they are constantly battling to get the support services they need. All this can leave family carers feeling abandoned and powerless.

If you're in this situation, asking for help when you need it can be hard. Assertiveness is an important communication skill to have, not just for interaction with the person you support, but so you can communicate properly with doctors, nurses, family and friends.

Being unable to communicate your needs, feelings or specific information clearly will not only cause you frustration and anger, it may also cause tension between you and the person you are communicating with. For example, you may feel that people aren't listening to what you are trying to explain to them, which can lead to feelings of anger, stress, isolation and even depression.

Anyone can become more assertive with a bit of practice. The best place to start is to look closely at how you communicate with other people – for example, your body language when you speak to someone, the way you ask for things, or the way you approach a subject that needs discussing. Clear communication is a fundamental part of assertiveness.

Keep conversations clear and specific, and remember that you have choices, so say 'I could' or 'I might' instead of 'I must' or 'I should'. Also, say 'no' – you're allowed to! And don't apologise if you have to say no to something. It may not seem it at first, but people will soon recognise this as a strength and respect your assertiveness. If you're trying to explain something to someone who doesn't seem to be listening, or who doesn't agree with something you feel is important, you could try something called the 'broken record' technique. This involves repeating your point over and over again until it's clear to the other person. It's important to be polite and calm, but firm with your point and always explain the advantages or benefits of what you are talking about. Keeping written records of conversations is also a good idea so, if needed, you can refer to them later.

From the Carers New Zealand website

The Mission of Carers' Society Otago is to ensure that every family carer is recognized and supported.



HERE WE ARE AT A HEALTH EXPO IN MILTON

Do join us in the Carers' Lounge for a cuppa or a chat, a bit of quiet time, or to explore
our Information Zone and Jennie Clegg Lending Library
Up the stairs or take the elevator
Community House
301 Moray Pl
Dunedin

Some of the wonderful support we receive throughout the year is from:

New Zealand Lottery Grant Board, COGS, Presbyterian Support Otago,
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Dunedin Community House, William Downie Stewart Charitable Trust, Dunedin City Council,
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The Otago Masonic Trust, Bendigo Valley Sports & Charity Foundation,
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