

Australian version

iSupport For Dementia

Training and support manual
for carers of people with dementia



Unit 4. Involving others

Sharing tasks

Why is this unit important?

Involving other people to share the responsibilities of providing care will help you to continue to care in the long term.

How will this unit help me?

By practising the skill 'Asking for help'.

What will I learn?

- What kind of help you might need
- How to ask others for help in an appropriate way

Involving family and friends

It might be difficult to involve others in the care of the person you care for.

You could think that others will not be able to provide care as good as you can or that they do not have time or might say 'no' when you ask for help.

As time progresses, the person you care for will need more and more help with daily activities and it is important to involve others so the tasks can be shared.

It can also be helpful to have someone to talk to who understands your situation and feelings.

Do not wait too long, since help early on will help you to continue the care for the person in the long term.



Who is helping? Let's look at an example

Find out whether Lee, David and Mary are receiving help, and if so, what kind of help.

Lee

Lee takes care of her mother who has dementia.

She receives no help from others.

She spends a lot of time taking care of her mother and feels overwhelmed.

She would like to get some help from others.

David

David takes care of his wife who has dementia.

David has involved his two sisters in the care.

The sisters regularly take his wife out for shopping or help with cleaning the house.

Mary

Mary takes care of her husband who has dementia. Mary receives help from her family, friends and neighbours.

Some helpers assist with shopping or cleaning the home, others take her husband for a walk or just listen to the difficulties she has with his memory loss.

What types of help and support are provided?

The types of help and support that Mary receives are presented below.

Practical help

- Family: Once a month my sister helps with cleaning the house.
- Friends: Once a week my friend Joan comes over to help with shopping and cooking.

Emotional support

- Friends: Murray always has a listening ear when I need it.

Help with pleasant activities

- Family: Several family members take my husband out for a walk on a regular basis.

Providing information

- Acquaintances/neighbours:
- My neighbours help to find information on dementia.

Activity



Which help do you receive?

Tick the boxes for the types of help you receive. If the help you are receiving is not listed below, use the empty box at the end to fill in your answer. Do your family, friends, neighbours or others provide:

Practical help

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

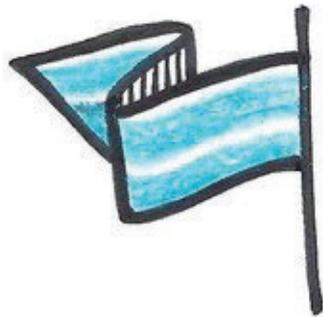
Emotional help

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

Help with pleasant activities

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

Activity
Information
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Other help
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



Tip 

Keep in mind that sharing care tasks is common and may relieve you to do something pleasant for yourself, run an errand without having to bring the person you care for or just enjoy a well-deserved break.

Activity



Own support network

Take a look at your own network as stated in the previous pages, what do you see?

I receive help in 1 category.

It is very good that you are already involving others. You might want to receive help in other ways too.

Think about people who might be able to help you.

My Aged Care

Help at Home, <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/contact> or Phone 1800 200 422 Mon - Fri 8am - 8pm and Sat 10am to 2pm.

I receive help in more than 1 category.

It is very good that you are already involving others in the care for the person you care for.

If needed, you can ask for help from other people as well. Perhaps the examples helped you identify people you had not considered before.

My Aged Care

Help at Home, <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/contact> or Phone 1800 200 422 Mon - Fri 8am - 8pm and Sat 10am to 2pm.

I do not receive help.

You have indicated that you do not receive help at the moment. Keep in mind that providing care can be difficult. Think about ways to involve others in sharing the tasks. Remember that you do not know whether people will want to help unless you ask. It can be difficult to find help if you don't have family nearby or live in a rural or isolated area, or if your family refuses to help.

Think about alternatives such as your faith community, contacting your doctor to ask for advice, or the national carer support network, click <http://www.carersupportsa.org.au/>

My Aged Care

Help at Home, <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/contact> or Phone 1800 200 422 Mon - Fri 8am - 8pm and Sat 10am to 2pm.

What are things you would like to get more help with?

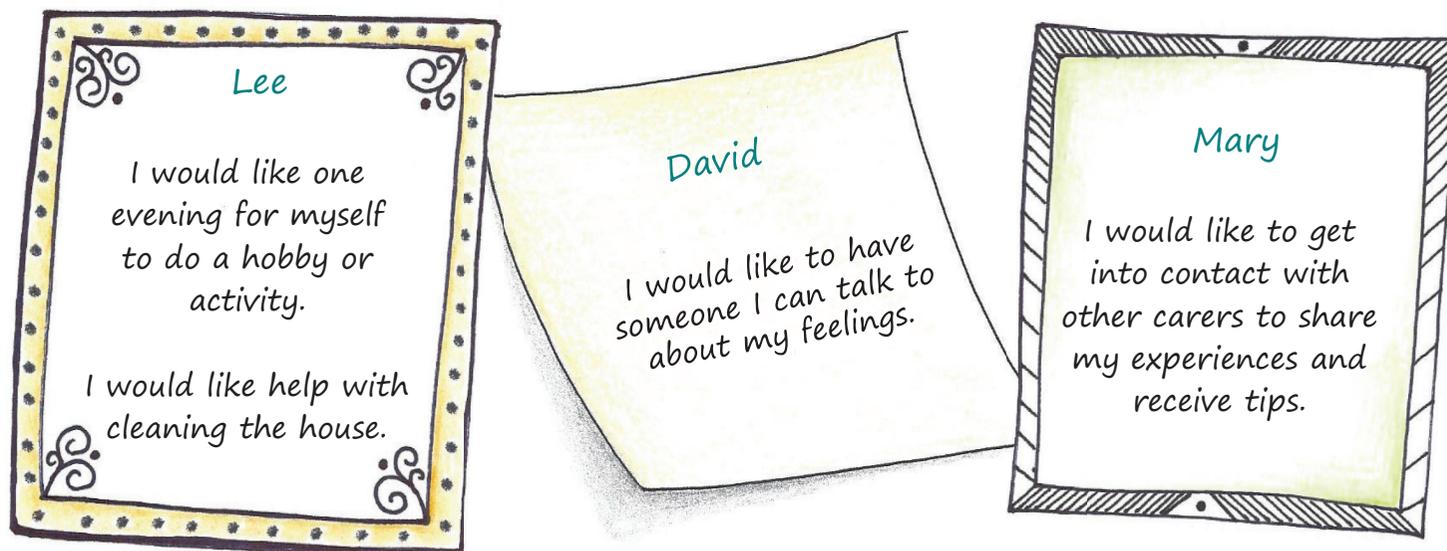
Before you ask someone to help, it is important to know what it is you would like to ask. It can help to make a wish list of your needs.

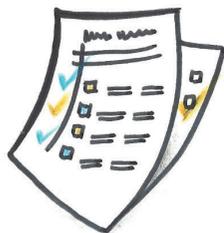
Let's first have a look at Lee, David and Mary. You can see their wish lists below.

What is your wish list?

Write your own wish list for the help or support you would like to receive. Wishes can be:

- I would like help with bathing the person
- I would like advice on how to deal with the person
- I would like adjustments to be made in my home to accommodate the person's care needs





What is your wish list?

List those wishes that you think are achievable.

If you know beforehand that you might not be able to achieve a certain wish, it might be better to list a different wish which is more attainable.

For instance, Lee would prefer to hire someone to clean the house everyday of the week.

However, Lee can not afford this and realises her wish is not realistic.

She could hire someone to clean the house once every two weeks or ask someone who she does not need to pay, such as a friend or relative.

She can ask the person to clean the whole house, or to help with specific tasks that are difficult for her, such as cleaning the floors.

She can also explore if her mother is eligible for government subsidised care support through

- (i) Commonwealth Home Support Programme or
- (ii) Home care packages by contact My Aged Care via 1800 200 422 or visit the website: <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/contact>

Make a top 3 of wishes that seem achievable:

Activity 	
Make a list of wishes that seem achievable	
Wish 1	_____
Wish 2	_____
Wish 3	_____

Who can I turn to?

Now it is time to think about who could help. Some people have no problem asking for help, other people are not used to it but do not mind giving it a try. There are also people who find it very difficult to ask for help. The next section will teach you skills to ask for help effectively.

My top 3 wishes are:

Wish 1

Wish 2

Wish 3

How to ask others for help effectively?

If you would like to ask others for help it is important you do this in an effective way.

This means that you should be able to talk to others about your thoughts, feelings and experiences.

It also means that you stand up for yourself.



Things that will help you to ask for help effectively

- Think about what you want or need and what your feelings are about the current situation.
- Describe your problem in one or two sentences.
- Describe your thoughts and feelings clearly, so that the other person can understand your point of view.
- Be honest and direct.
- Keep the feelings of the other person in mind.
- Give detailed information about what kind of help you need.
- Be flexible: maybe you won't get exactly what you asked for, but you will get something that will be helpful.
- Break it down into smaller parts - it's usually easier for people to say yes to a little request than to a big one.
- If you reach a point in which you do not know what to do any more: take a break - go back to the discussion at a future time. For example: agree to think about it and talk again tomorrow afternoon.
- If appropriate, offer to do the task first together.
- Don't give up. It may take many attempts before things change.
- Asking for help will not always lead to the result you want, but it is important that you feel you are able to ask for it.



How does Lee ask her sister for help effectively?

Let's have a look at Lee again.

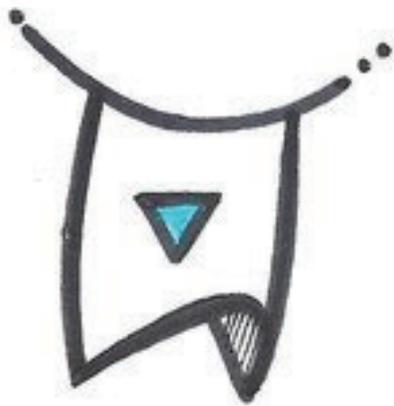
She knows who to turn to for help and decides to ask her sister.

Lee would like to have an evening to herself once a week.

She tries to ask for help in three different ways.

Which of the following examples represents an effective way to ask for help?

Only one answer is correct.



Check your understanding



- 1. Lee tells her sister that she wants to take care of their mother, but that she just needs a short break from caregiving during the week. She says: 'I would like to discuss how you could help in a way that is possible for you.'
- 2. Lee decides to attend a weekly one-hour class in the evening to have a break from providing care. However, she does not discuss with her sister the importance of having a break during the week. When she asks her sister to take care of their mother for an hour, her sister said: 'Sorry, I have no time.' Lee cancels her class.
- 3. Lee approaches her sister by saying, 'I'm sick and tired of you not doing anything! You never have time to help me care for our mother!'

ANSWERS - Unit 4. Involving others

Check your understanding



- ✓ **Effective example1**
Correct! This is an effective way of asking for help. Lee stands up for herself, says what she is thinking and is honest about her need for a regular break. She keeps the interests of her sister in mind too.
- ✗ **Passive example2**
This is not an effective way of asking help. Her sister may not be aware that Lee is feeling overwhelmed. Lee is not being honest about her feelings and is trying to avoid a conflict with her sister. She does not stand up for herself. It is a passive way of asking for help.
- ✗ **Beliefs and values that may have influenced the person's decision.**
This is not an effective way of asking help. Lee becomes angry. However, her sister may not be aware that Lee is feeling overwhelmed, because she did not clearly mention this. She does not approach her sister in a respectful way. It is an aggressive way of asking for help.



Activity



Your own plan to involve others

Make your own plan to involve others in the care for the person.

Now think of your wishes and who you can turn to for help. Imagine yourself in a situation in which you will ask for help. Please answer the following questions.

Who would you like to ask for help?

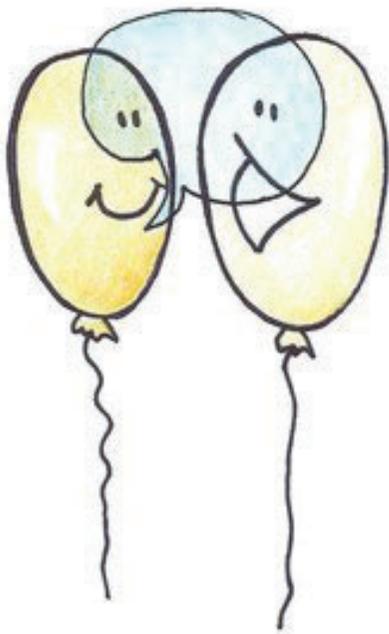
What would you do if the person does NOT want to help?

What would you like to say?

What would you do if the person does want to help?

Your own plan to involve others

How Lee answered these questions:



Activity Example



1. Who would you like to ask for help?

Answer Lee: My sister

2. What would you like to say?

Answer Lee: I want to care for our mother but sometimes it becomes too much.

I need to have time for myself once a week. I would like to ask whether you would be willing to help.

3. What would you do if the person does NOT want to help?

Answer Lee: First, I would explain how important it is that I can have a regular break to continue the care for our mother. Then, I would ask for the reason why she does not want to help. I would also ask if there is a better time that she would consider helping. But if she does not want to help maybe she knows someone else who will or can perhaps help cover the costs to pay for help.

4. What would you do if the person does want to help?

Answer Lee: I would say that I am very grateful that she is being supportive and thank her for her help.

Remember: to involve others and share care tasks early in caregiving

It will be good for your health and will enable you to continue the care for a longer period of time. Thus, the person you care for will benefit too from you having support.

Carers Australia

The peak national body representing carers of people with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or those who are frail or aged. Carers Australia provides information, support, education, training and counselling. <http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/> or to speak with someone phone Carer Supports and Services 1800 242 636

My aged care

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/caring-someone-particular-need/caring-someone-dementia>
or Phone 1800200422 Mon-Fri 8am-8pm and Sat 10am-2pm

Carer Gateway

Carer Gateway is a national online and phone service that provides practical information and resources to support carers. The interactive service finder helps carers connect to local support services.

Free call:1800422737, Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm

Further Information

Australian Government Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) is an entry-level home help program for older people who need some help with daily tasks to live independently at home.

The aim of the CHSP is to help older people live as independently as possible. Depending on needs and eligibility, support services may include:

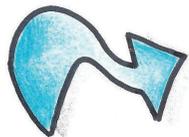
- domestic assistance - household jobs
 - personal care - help with bathing, showering or getting dressed
 - home maintenance - minor general repairs and care of your house
 - home modification - minor installation of safety aids such as alarms, ramps and support rails in your home
 - nursing care - a qualified nurse to dress a wound or provide continence advice in your home
 - social support - social activities in a community-based group setting
 - transport - help getting people out and about for shopping or appointments.
 - helping with shopping for food
 - help with making meals and storing food in your home
 - Allied health support services - such as physiotherapy
- To find out if you need an assessment and if you are eligible for help at home services, you should call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422.

RELATED LEARNING UNITS

- Module 3 Unit 1 Reducing stress in everyday life
- Module 4 Unit 4 Personal care
- Module 5 Unit 2 Aggression

You finished this learning unit, well done!

Would you like to try the following relaxation exercise?



Number counting

You can relax by focusing on your breathing and counting from 20 back to 1. This is how you do it:

- Sit or lie down comfortably in a quiet place.
- Breathe slowly.
- With each breath, take at least three seconds to breathe in and at least six seconds to breathe out.
- Focus on your breathing and your lower abdomen when you breathe until you feel calm and peaceful inside your heart and mind.
- Say the word 'relax' whenever you breathe out.
- Tell yourself that you will start counting down from 20 to 1.
- Tell yourself that you will double your level of relaxation for each and every count, and you will be totally relaxed when you reach 1.
- Start counting down from 20 to 1 slowly. Say the word 'relax' whenever you count. (That is, take a deep breath, say '20', breathe out slowly and say 'Relax', take a deep breath, count '19', breathe out slowly and say 'Relax', and so on.)

Now do this exercise again but close your eyes.



You finished this unit, well done!