

Emotional support for carers

emotional support and counselling

VOCAL - Voice of Carers Across Lothian ● April 2017

Looking after yourself

Becoming a carer affects all of us in different ways. Whether we felt we had a choice about it or were thrown into it because of circumstances, there is no doubt that caring can be difficult at times. There is not usually any prior training so most people muddle through as best they can, learning as they go along.

The daily responsibility of attending to someone else's needs may mean that your own needs are often neglected.

Taking time out for yourself

Remember when you had time to meet people, go to the cinema, or do whatever it was you used to enjoy doing? Leisure time is often the first thing that disappears for carers, and the last thing they have time for, and yet it is one of the best stress relievers.

Carers can apply to VOCAL Midlothian's *Wee Breaks Fund* for grants to cover short breaks including leisure activities or a series of short regular breaks.

Taking part in groups

Joining a local carers' support group can be a way of getting both practical and emotional support. No matter what you are struggling with there will usually be someone who has been through the same thing and can understand how you feel.

For more information about looking after yourself - from getting enough sleep, healthy eating and relaxation techniques - visit the VOCAL website:

www.vocal.org.uk/carer-support/care-for-yourself

Managing stress

VOCAL runs regular **stress management courses** designed to help carers to understand stress and its impact, develop techniques to plan for and manage stressful situations. For more information visit **www.carerevents.co.uk**, email **midlothian@vocal.org.uk** or call **0131 663 6869**.

VOCAL Carer Counselling Service

VOCAL's COSCA recognised counselling service is open to carers who require emotional support. The first step is to call **0131 466 8082** or email **counselling@vocal.org.uk** to arrange an intake session. For carers living in Edinburgh or Midlothian, financial contributions are agreed at a level to suit your individual circumstances. Carers who live in other local authority areas can access counselling at a cost of £20 per session.