

# Information Sheet



## Self Care for Foster Carers

### Emotional Support

Foster carers and their families may from time to time feel that they could benefit from some extra support from a professional counsellor. Part of the support to foster carers by the Department of Children and Families is access to EASA counselling services.

This is a FREE and CONFIDENTIAL service. Foster carers can refer themselves by contacting EASA:

- Alice Springs (08) 89534225  
email: [esaalicesprings@easa.org.au](mailto:esaalicesprings@easa.org.au)
- Darwin (08) 89411752  
email: [esadarwin@easa.org.au](mailto:esadarwin@easa.org.au)
- Katherine (08) 89411752  
email: [esakatherine@easa.org.au](mailto:esakatherine@easa.org.au)
- Or phone the TOLL FREE number 1800 193 123

EASA is completely independent of Department of Children and Families and no information will be disclosed without your permission. You may feel that you just need someone to listen rather than give advice.

### Taking Care of Yourself

It is important to know how to take care of yourself and recognise signs that you need to recharge. Your role as a foster carer can be demanding and challenging - as well as rewarding - but it's useful to identify some strategies that will help cope with the inevitable stress that comes with being a carer.

One of the first steps is acknowledging the need for self-care and identifying ways of caring for yourself.

You can start by identifying your particular stressors.

Identifying self-care is an individual matter: what is good for your friend might not be what suits your needs.

Start by looking at things you can build into your daily routine, even for 20 minutes. They don't have to require a lot of money, babysitters or special equipment. The key is to get into the habit of self-care time out.

Undertake your chosen activity with mindfulness, acknowledging that this is not wasting time but contributing to your wellbeing and self-nurturing.

### Why is self-care so hard?

We don't always readily identify what we need. Sometimes we might feel pressured to try something that doesn't suit our needs. **Don't be put off trying something new but make sure it's what YOU want to do.**

Find out what leaves you feeling recharged, it might take some experimenting. **Schedule in YOUR time. Your self-care time is always at risk of being 'rescheduled'. Life has a way of 'getting in the way' - children have the flu, school meetings and medical visits. Try to keep your self-care simple and achievable.**

### Some ideas for self-care and relaxation:

- make time for yourself and your close relationships
- plan activities and put them in your diary
- identify things that interest you, like sports or hobbies and time with friends
- take time to exercise regularly, walking, walking the dog, swimming or yoga. Join an Aqua aerobics class or tai chi
- go for a bike ride
- go to a movie or watch a DVD of a latest release
- spend time in the garden
- read a good book or visit the local library
- enjoy a massage or facial
- have a pedicure
- take a long hot bath – add in some relaxing bath oil
- take some time to spend with your pets
- have lunch or coffee with a friend
- have a good laugh-try to maintain your sense of humor-phone a friend
- embrace nature. Sit in your favorite spot in the garden and clear your mind.
- take up a new hobby
- take a nap
- listen to music-dance around the house
- meditate for 20 minutes

### Respite Care

Respite Care is another name for a "break". Respite care is a good time to refocus and spend some time with your family or partner. It is important to discuss planning your respite breaks with your carer support person or case manager.

### Further Useful Information

You can visit your General Practitioner for a mental health care plan and request a referral to a clinical psychologist. The referral to a psychologists provides for 12 sessions of therapy per year.