

INVOLVING FAMILY & FRIENDS IN CARING

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF INVOLVING FAMILY AND FRIENDS IN CARING?

Sharing the care with family and friends benefits them as well as you.

The benefits of sharing the care with family and friends **for you** include:

- less load and responsibilities for you
- less emotional stress when you know someone is supporting you
- peace of mind that another carer is available if you are not
- time for you and your own needs
- increased mental and physical health and wellbeing

The benefits of sharing the care with family and friends **for them** include:

- understanding of the challenges and rewards of caring
- developing care skills for when you are unavailable to provide care
- knowing when to help without interfering
- contributing to decision-making

Involving family and friends in caring can also benefit the person you are caring for. It gives the person you support:

- the opportunity to spend time with other people
- more people to rely on and a sense of being well supported
- different ideas, sources of information and advice
- more people to assist with problem solving
- relief as they may feel responsible for your care of them and are concerned that you are not getting a break

WHAT IF OTHER PEOPLE ARE RELUCTANT TO HELP?

It can be difficult to ask for help when family members or friends seem reluctant.

Family members or friends may be reluctant to help because they:

- have other commitments such as work or children to look after
- do not know how to help
- are afraid they will do something wrong
- do not know what to say or do when around the person being supported

- do not have a good relationship with the person being supported
- do not feel they can cope with the emotional challenges of caring
- have different ideas about caring

If you know why they are reluctant, you may be able to work out a way of sharing the care that is suitable for them as well as you. It is ok to talk to them about the rewards and challenges of caring.

Sometimes other people see things differently to you. They may feel the person being supported can receive good care in a residential facility. They may feel that less care is needed than provided. It can be easy to become frustrated at these times when it does not seem that they understand.

Try to be calm. Show them a practical list of the tasks involved in caring. Let them know where you could do with some help. It could be helping out a couple of evenings a week or taking the person on weekend outings.

WHAT IF THE PERSON BEING CARED FOR IS RELUCTANT TO INVOLVE OTHER CARERS?

It is important to ensure that the person you care for is well informed, and included in any decision making around including others in their care. They may be anxious about change, or worried about new people being involved in their day to day routines. Make sure you involve them in any planning and work to allay any fears or concerns they may have.

SHARING THE CARE

When your family members and friends do become involved they may do things differently to you. It is ok to help them out and make suggestions especially when they first begin to help. However, trust their way of doing things if the required outcome is achieved and it is beneficial and suitable for the person being supported.

CARERS' CORNER

FAMILY MEETINGS

Family meetings provide an opportunity for carers, families and sometimes the person being supported to discuss any issues and make decisions about now and the future.

Family decisions help everyone feel involved in decision making, provide opportunities for support and ensure everyone knows what is happening.

If you hold a family meeting:

- Consider who should attend. This can include health professionals and service providers
- Make it at a time that is suitable for most people
- Choose a quiet and private place where issues can be discussed freely
- Provide information about what will be discussed in the meeting
- Aim for outcomes
- Let everyone have a chance to put their point of view across
- Accept that you may not all agree

- Allow time for decision making. You may need to arrange a follow up meeting after allowing them a week or so to consider the decision
- Debrief with someone afterwards
- Set guidelines for discussion

Conflict can arise during meetings especially if there are any unresolved family issues. Families can have patterns of communication or behaviour towards each other that may need to be managed during a meeting.

You can minimise conflict by setting guidelines that everyone is aware of. These include:

- no blaming words
- everyone has their say
- listen actively to others
- stick to the issues, not to past issues
- accept that you may not all agree
- taking a break if the situation becomes heightened

You may need an objective person to mediate. Consider a person who is least likely to be affected emotionally by the discussion.

THANK YOU



If you or your company can support the work we do for people living with Parkinson's locally or nationally please get in touch with your local division or National Office.



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