

# Brí, Independent brain injury support and advocacy

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## Information Sheet - Looking after yourself

As a Carer, your own health is vital. If you don't look after your own health and well being, you could end up needing care yourself! However hard-pressed you are, you must make looking after yourself an equal priority with providing care for another person.

### Sharing the Care

Don't be afraid to ask family, friends or respite services for the help you need to get away from your caring responsibilities for a few hours or even a few days.

Sharing the care with other family members means that they can have the experience of providing care for a loved one. This can be very fulfilling for them and the person needing care.

If there are activities that you enjoy, don't give them up simply because you have become a carer. Even though the many demands of caring may make it difficult to manage, it's really important that you follow your own interests outside of your caring role.

Often, Carers say they feel guilty when they leave the house or enjoy an outside activity without the person they care for. Sometimes, the person you care for may not want another person looking after them. This is a challenging situation but one which may be overcome by availing of a respite service. If you can take a break, it can also benefit the person you care for.

### Your local Carers Group - Knowing you're not alone

It's easy to become isolated when you're a Carer. You might be too busy to keep up with friends and family and people may visit you less often. Loneliness can be one of the worst side effects of being a Carer.

Sometimes just talking to someone who understands what you're going through can be a great relief. Sharing your experiences with someone you trust - family, friends, neighbours, other Carers or health workers can help ease your sense of isolation and put your own situation in perspective.

### Keeping healthy - Here are some tips to help you stay healthy

Try to get a little fresh air & exercise every day. -This will make you feel more energetic and give you a break.

Have healthy, regular meals.- This isn't always easy to do, but it will keep your energy levels up.

Get enough rest and sleep— Tiredness and exhaustion often add to the stress of caring.

Contact your local Carers' Clinic or Group to find out about the practical Carers' Courses which give you help and advice on the everyday challenges of being a Carer in the home.

Talk to your doctor about your caring role and the demands it makes on you.

### Making time just for yourself

Everyone deserves a little "you" time every now and then. It's a good idea to phone a friend for a chat, listen to some music, have an early night or treat yourself to something that you like. It may be helpful to make a habit of creating a special time just for yourself. Don't feel guilty about this. Planning ahead can make this more achievable and it's well worth it in the long term.

If you are looking for a counselor or psychotherapist in your area, you will find names and contact information on the following website: [www.counsellingdirectory.ie](http://www.counsellingdirectory.ie)