

Staying Connected



Staying connected to friends, family and the community helps you to stay healthy, both emotionally and physically. Yet for carers, isolation and loneliness, even feelings of abandonment, are real and common whether those carers live in a big city,

small town, large property or small farm. There are good reasons for this. Caring can be a 24/7 job and with little, or in some areas no respite available, many carers find getting out of their home for even a few hours is close to impossible. Other carers find friends and family withdraw from situations they find too uncomfortable or distressing to deal with – they just don't want to know.

Loss of income as carers leave jobs so they can care full-time means that social activities once enjoyed have to be dropped. Anxiety and depression often make it hard for carers to reach out for the help they need to find ways of getting, or staying, connected.

Recently I attended a conference in regional NSW. I spoke with a carer who had to move with her husband

and children from a very small country town of only 600 people to this larger town hours away so that she could get the medical help and services her son with a disability needed. She knew no-one in this new town, had no network of old friends or family to help. Getting 'connected' was difficult. She was tired, nervous, didn't know where to start – it was all too hard. She became depressed and withdrawn from her other children and husband. A local carer support group she was referred to by her GP was the first step in getting connected to the world outside her home.

In this issue of *Carers News* you will find articles about getting, and staying, connected. If you are a carer and have found ways of getting connected in your community or to the wider world please write or email us and share what you have learned. If you are a service provider tell us what strategies you have developed to help carers stay connected. We would love to print these suggestions in our next newsletter.



Laraine Toms
President

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