



CARERS FACT SHEET 9

Deciding not to be a carer

It can be very hard to make a decision not to care for someone or to no longer care for someone either because you can no longer cope or because they are due to come out of hospital.

If you decide not to care, you may think you are letting them down but please try not to feel guilty. Looking after someone is not always easy or satisfying, and caring can be physically, emotionally and financially draining.

If you have been caring for someone for a long time and you now think you can no longer cope, you may find it particularly difficult to come to terms with.

You may think that the time has come to consider a residential, or nursing, home but are not sure you are doing the right thing.

The important thing to remember is that you can continue to care for someone even if you are not looking after him or her in your own home - it's just that the caring is done in a different way - and you may find that you are able to spend more quality time with them.

If you feel you can no longer carry on caring, you must discuss this with relatives and friends, ask your GP for support and advice, seek counselling and ask social services to help. Try calling the Carers Active Listening Line to offload your concerns or feelings (08000 3 23456). Your local Carers Support Worker should be able to support you through the process of arranging alternative care for the person you have been caring for. There may be a local carers advocacy service available to support you. (ask Carers Together 01794 519495)

If you can't care and a person is due to come out of hospital you may need to make important decisions quickly when the person you are caring for is in hospital, but don't feel pressurised by hospital staff who may make assumptions about the amount of help you can offer.

If you need more time to decide, tell the staff. It's better to be realistic than to over-commit yourself and then find you can't manage. If the hospital staff continue to assume you will care for the person even if you say you can't provide the care that's needed, you can refuse to provide care and can ask a friend to support you in this.