



Becoming a caregiver

Caring for someone who has a life-limiting or terminal illness can be both a challenging and a rewarding journey. You may be the primary or main caregiver, or part of a wider team that includes extended family, whānau and friends. Whatever your part in the team being prepared for what lies ahead is important. Below are some useful tips and information for those in caregiving roles.

Services and supports

General practitioner (GP)

Your family doctor, also known as your GP, is there to ensure you have the support and assistance that you require. It is important they know of any difficulties or concerns you are having so they can assist you. They know about available services and can refer you for additional support if required.

Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination (NASC)

The Needs Assessment team provides important information about available support services.

A referral can be made to the NASC service by your family doctor or GP. A Needs Assessor will visit your home and undertake an assessment of the care that is required. They will provide information on available services and, if you are eligible, organise for someone to come and assist you in your home. The Needs Assessor will also be able to tell you about whether you are eligible for the Ministry of Health **Carer Support scheme**.

The Carer Support scheme provides funding for a carer to have respite or 'a break' from their care-giving role. The scheme contributes to the cost of care which can be provided either in the home or in a Residential Care (RC) facility, if that is more appropriate.

To find out more about accessing this scheme, talk to your GP or Needs Assessor or go to <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/disability-services/types-disability-support/respite/carer-support>

Work and Income (WINZ) support

As a caregiver, you may be eligible for financial support from WINZ (Work and Income New Zealand).

The support available is income tested. To find out more about how to apply, please go to the Ministry of Social Development website <https://check.msd.govt.nz>

Caring for yourself

As a caregiver, it can sometimes be difficult to manage and attend to your own needs. There are different ways you may find helpful to do this. Finding the ways that work best for you is important.

These may include:

- maintaining social connections – staying in touch with friends and social networks is a good way to stay feeling connected and 'in touch' with what is going on outside home.
- taking regular breaks – taking breaks from caregiving is an important way to help manage stress and to boost your energy levels
- not being afraid to ask for help – caregiving can be a demanding and difficult task.

It is okay to ask for help. Talk to your GP, friends or family about how you are feeling and how they can help.

For more information about caregiving and the support services available in your local community for caregivers, you can go to www.carers.net.nz