



# Taking Care of Yourself



# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

**When you are a carer it is often the case that the most important thing in your life is the person you love and care for. This can sometimes stop you from paying attention to your own needs and more importantly your own health.**

**This booklet gives you a few tips towards putting yourself first once in a while and some pointers to keep your health in check.**

## **Helpful Tips**

- See your GP about yourself and not just the person you look after.
- Try to keep your social contacts so that you and the person you care for do not become isolated.
- Take regular breaks and time out from your caring responsibilities, even if it is just 30 minutes each day.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Remember that you both need someone else to talk to.
- Learn about your situation through books and support groups.
- If you are in an emergency situation, call the emergency services for help. It is important not to hurt yourself by trying to help the person on your own. This includes when someone has fallen.

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- Tiredness can be a serious problem for some carers. Why not read the booklet: 'Tiredness' produced by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. For a copy please contact us on **0161 848 2400**.

## **Stress**

A caring relationship is an intense and intimate one and the feelings that arise can be very powerful. The fear of being unable to cope, a sense of guilt and resentment on either side can lead to stress.

Stress can have many effects, such as headaches, backaches, constant colds, tiredness, skin problems and stomach troubles. The psychological effects can lead to bad temper, depression, anxiety and tension.

## **Stress Management**

- Make sure you have some regular time to relax, i.e. put aside some time each day for yourself.
- Do something that is enjoyable, i.e. meet friends, have your hair done, etc.
- Try to sleep at least 7-8 hours per night.
- Rest your mind as well as your eyes.
- Don't depend on drugs and/or alcohol.

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- Try and take some regular exercise, e.g. a walk in the fresh air.
- Try and eat a balanced diet.

### Sleep

A routine can help with sleep, such as avoiding daytime naps, going for a walk in the evening, a warm bath and going to bed at the same time can make it easier to fall and stay asleep.

**MIND** produce a helpful and informative factsheet on insomnia, telephone **0161 226 9907** for a copy.

### Sleep Matters

A helpline which offers support and information to people with insomnia. It is open from 6.00pm to 8.00pm on **020 8994 9874**.

### Moving and handling

If you have to assist someone with moving on a regular basis, you must remember that your own health may be at risk. If you damage your back it can cause long-term problems. Assisting someone to move, if done properly and in a safe environment, should not cause damage to anyone.

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## **Before assisting someone to move:**

- Is there any equipment, such as a hoist, that can help you?
- Is there anybody who can assist you?
- Are the surroundings safe? (Wires, rugs, wet floor etc.)

## **When ready to assist someone to move:**

- Make sure you have enough space.
- Adjust the bed, chair or equipment so it is in the right position.
- Make sure the person you are helping knows what you are going to do.

## **When assisting someone to move:**

- Explain what you intend to do and when (e.g. On the count of three).
- Position your feet so that they are completely stable.
- Bend at the hip and knees; keep your back straight.
- If someone falls, it is important that you do not lift them on your own.

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## **Talk to Someone**

It is very difficult to balance your health and social life to your commitments when caring. It is important that if things feel too much for you to cope with, that there is someone to support you. Trafford Carers Centre offers a Helpline where you can talk to somebody, who is willing to listen. We also provide a confidential counselling service. Telephone **0161 848 2400** if you would like a chat or some support.

## **Reflexology and Massage**

Trafford Carers Centre offers reflexology and massage sessions to carers in Trafford. These occur on a monthly basis. Carers would receive their first session free, thereafter each session costs £10 payable in advance.

### **What is Reflexology?**

Reflexology is a natural healing art based on the principle that there are reflex points in the feet, outer ears and hands that are actually “*reflections*” of body parts. Reflexology accelerates the body’s natural healing abilities and directly acts upon particular organs, glands and body parts through gentle stimulation upon the points or reflexes. It can ease tension and improve circulation.

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## What is massage?

Massage is a form of therapy in which soft tissues are made more pliable which increases blood flow and healing.

- It uses manipulation of the body by rubbing, kneading and tapping. It can be a useful aid to relaxation.
- It can alleviate pain and discomfort.
- It promotes healing and can relieve stress and tensions.



## What happens when you go for treatment?

Once you arrive for your appointment the therapist will introduce themselves, help to make you feel at ease and answer any questions you may have. They will need to take some brief notes about your medical history. A session normally lasts between 30 minutes and one hour. The Centre uses voluntary and reduced rate therapists.

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If you feel you would benefit from reflexology or massage and would like to book a session at Trafford Carers Centre then call on **0161 848 2400**.

Our reflexology and massage is very popular, meaning that many people are on the waiting list. We try to prioritise people who have been on the list the longest and those under significant stress. We also prioritise people who have not yet received money from our Personal Budgets. The Centre is constantly trying to find more voluntary therapists so that your waiting time is reduced, so please bear with us.

Once you have had a session of reflexology or massage, you can receive a further session at a cost of £10 paid in advance, you will then go back on the waiting list.

If you need to cancel your appointment you need to let us know as soon as possible. Please ring us on **0161 848 2400**. If you do not show up to a reflexology/massage session without telling us then you will incur a fine of £10.

## PRIVATE SESSIONS

Some of our therapists also accept private clients. Our Carers' Helpline can provide you with a list of all our voluntary therapists if you would like to arrange some additional sessions with them.

You can also book private appointments at a lower cost at BlueSCI, 54-56 Seymour Grove, Old Trafford, Manchester M16 0LN on **0161 912 4828**.

**Trafford College** also provides cheap rate Massages by students which start from £12 with prices varying depending on the type of massage that you require. Additionally they also provide hair and beauty treatments at cheap rates, with a cut and blow dry starting from £8.00. The salon is located at South Trafford College, Manchester Road, West Timperley, Altrincham. For more information or to book an appointment contact the reception on **0161 952 4767** or see the website for a full list of treatments.

**Website:** [www.trafford.ac.uk/enhance](http://www.trafford.ac.uk/enhance)

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## **Events and Parties**

Trafford Carers Centre regularly holds social events for local carers. There is no charge for these services. We usually hold parties twice a year; one in summer and one in winter. Every month we try to arrange a social event, coffee afternoon or trip. These events are social opportunities to relax and to meet other carers in similar situations. If you want to come along to an event then you can normally just turn up. However, for some events we will have limited places and so may ask you to book. Details of all social events are advertised in our Carers' Newsletter. To receive a copy please contact us on **0161 848 2400**.

## **Special Arrangements**

The Centre will (wherever possible) assist you with transport or care for the person you look after so that you can attend an event or training. If lots of people request care for the person they look after then we may not be able to arrange it for you every time. We will therefore have to prioritise care for those people who need it the most.

Doctors and other health or social care professionals have a responsibility to help carers maintain their own health.

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As a carer, you should ask your GP and other professionals that you see, to make it clear that you are a carer on your records and on the records of the person you care for. It is important that you do this as it means that they will understand better the pressure you are under and may be able to arrange services or support for you.

If you are over the age of 75 your GP must agree to carry out an annual health check for you (if you request it). GPs in Trafford can also 'prescribe' a self-help book for you to read from your local library. These are on topics such as anxiety and depression.

Trafford Carers Centre has a lot of information to help you to take care of yourself and the person you look after.

Please contact the Carers' Helpline on **0161 848 2400** if you would like any further information.

## OTHER SERVICES

### Stopping Smoking

For help to stop smoking, you can contact the practice nurse at your doctor's surgery or Trafford's Smoking Cessation Service on **0300 456 2400**. Alternatively this service can also help you locate your nearest pharmacy that provides community services to help smokers to quit.

### Trafford Healthy Minds

Website: [www.traffordhealthyminds.com](http://www.traffordhealthyminds.com)

This is an online self-help mental health programme developed by Trafford Council and the Primary Care Trust. The programme aims to offer a solution to the stresses and strains of everyday life. The interactive assessments help you to monitor and identify your feelings. It will set you targets and help you to track your progress. The programme can be accessed by all Trafford residents by logging on to the website using your home postcode as a password.

Products and services in this booklet are not endorsed or recommended by Trafford Carers Centre

## ADVERTISE WITH US

Displayed and distributed both in print and digital format, our E-books are used by carers and health and social care professionals across the borough of Trafford. Advertising with us is a fantastic, low cost way of reaching out to your audience, while also supporting the Carers Centre and carers in Trafford.

Six monthly contracts are available across our information E-books, covering a range of topics. If you would like to advertise your business or organisation with us, or would like more information, contact us:

Fundraising Team:

**0161 848 2402**

E-mail: [fundraising@traffordcarerscentre.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@traffordcarerscentre.org.uk)

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**Carers Helpline: 0161 848 2400**

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**[www.traffordcarerscentre.org.uk](http://www.traffordcarerscentre.org.uk)**



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