

Introduction to the module: Caring on a Daily Basis

Within this module we'll be exploring the basic aspects of Caring. The aim is to help you build on your existing knowledge and experience so that you can carry on caring on a daily basis. We'll be discussing some of the practical things that you need to do when looking after someone. In particular, you'll be looking at dealing with emergencies at home and managing the various physical and health needs of the cared for (some of these maybe relevant to your own situations).

Getting Started:

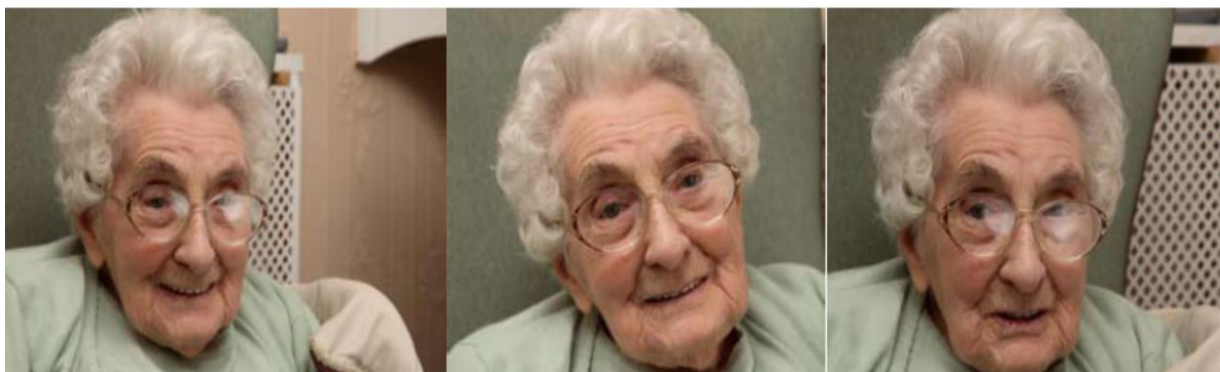
Every caring situation is different because every person is different. There may be a combination of the following tasks or observations involved:

- Assisting in eating and drinking
- Assistance in going to the toilet, washing and dressing
- Monitoring the cared for's behaviour or illness
- Assistance in taking medication

Whatever your involvement being a carer can present its challenges and caring is hard work. Many carers manage as best they can. They can at times feel lonely and this may takes its toll on the carers own health.

Here's a story that may well help you to put your own caring role into context:

Alice's Story



My husband Tom has dementia. He is now 94 and I'm 90 years old. I've always been determined to keep him at home as long as I can, I still am. It's just that I realise that my children are right and I really can't carry on alone. I've lost 2 stone over the past couple of years. I have arthritis that makes it hard for me to move Tom. Also I find walking hard because of my knees.

Tom goes to the day centre three times a week, so I do get a bit of spare time to myself. But it's at nights that it's the worst time for me.

Tom gets up and wonders about. So I have to lock everything up so he can't get out of the house, but I'm still awake or I get up in case he falls down the stairs or puts the kettle on.

Sometimes he pulls his incontinence pad out and it can take a good hour or so to get him clean, dry and dressed again.

It's a struggle. I still want Tom to be at home. So now I've decided to stop being stubborn, trying to do it all with no help.

I'm going to say 'YES' to the support that I've been offered because to be honest, and I can see it coming, I don't want to end up in hospital myself. That's not good for Tom or me!

Staying independent:

Many carers find it hard to care on their own. They tend to do so out of love, concern or duty. Some carers fear that once professionals become involved they will interfere, take over or insist that the person needing care needs to be put into a care home.

To be honest, this is not the case. All governmental guidance on social care and the Carers Organisations that you are involved in, want what is best for you and the cared for. The purpose of Carers Organisations are to tailor the specific support, services to what you and the care for want as far as they can.

Returning to Alice....

Alice chatted to her local Carer's Organisation about Tom and the challenge that she was having. With the help of that organisation they have helped to organise via their Social Worker for a Support Worker to come into Alice's home two nights a week. This helps Alice to get some sound sleep and feel more herself.

But...

What if Tom could not get out of his chair, should Alice help him?

Alice may well be able to manage Tom sometimes, but what if Tom got stuck in the bath?

You see, there needs to be more than a short term fix. It's important to look at the long term future.