

# Respite

## Navigators Guide

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A **Carer** is a person who provides regular help, assistance or support to children or adults who have a mental illness, disability, chronic illness or are frail aged, to allow them to live in the community.

Carers are usually family members but could also be friends. Some carers need to spend a lot of time caring and other carers may be able to also have a job.

Being a carer for someone can be a hard job. Caring for someone with a mental illness can have a huge emotional impact as well as leaving little time or energy for other things in your life.

Sometimes a carer will want or need to take a break from their caring role. A break can help improve a carer's wellbeing so they can continue to care for a friend or family member.

This break is called '**Respite**' and can be provided in the short-term, longer-term or in an emergency. During a **respite break** someone else provides the care you usually do. As families and carers have different respite needs, there are different types of respite services available.

A Carer may need a break for many different reasons including:

- ... Attending appointments
- ... Medical reasons
- ... Helping other family or friends
- ... Attending education/support groups
- ... Or simply having a rest or a holiday

### Mental Health Respite Program

The Mental Health Respite Program (MHRP) is an Australian Government initiative that provides a range of flexible respite options for people who look after a family member, friend or

neighbour who needs ongoing care or support to manage their daily life due to mental illness/psychiatric disability or intellectual disability.

The MHRP has two target groups:

- ... Carers of people with mental illness or psychiatric disability
- ... Carers of people with intellectual disability

While all carers are eligible for the respite program, carers needing emergency respite and older parent carers will be given priority.

The MHRP services are available throughout the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres, run by various organisations throughout Australia.

Staff at Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centres in your local area may work with you to develop a planned approach to accessing respite that may include:

- ... **In home respite:** a worker can go to the home and assist with the tasks usually undertaken by the carer.
- ... **Emergency Respite:** may be provided if something happens and a carer can't provide any help or support for a short time.
- ... **Community-based respite:** there are respite beds available in cottages in the community. There are cottages that have beds only for people with dementia, people with a disability or aged persons.
- ... **Residential Respite Care:** provides short term care in some aged care facilities to people who are assessed as needing residential respite by an Aged Care Assessment Team.

... **Information about other appropriate services** from our Carelink information database.

To talk about your individual respite needs:

**Contact Your Local**

**Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre**

**FREECALL 1800 052 222**  
 Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates.  
 An Australian Government Initiative

**Alternatively** you can visit our shopfront which is located in the Hunter Region at

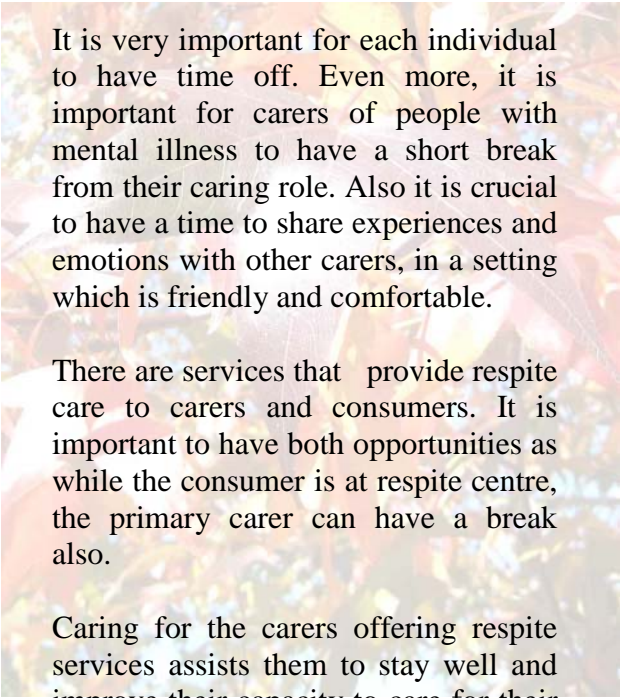
Walker Building Longworth Avenue  
 Wallsend Health Campus  
 Wallsend NSW 2287

**Other information:**

The Australian Government Department of Families, Housing and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) is responsible for the implementation and management of this program

**More information:**

More information about the Mental Health Respite Program is available at the FaHCSIA website at [www.fahcsia.gov.au/mentalhealth](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/mentalhealth)



It is very important for each individual to have time off. Even more, it is important for carers of people with mental illness to have a short break from their caring role. Also it is crucial to have a time to share experiences and emotions with other carers, in a setting which is friendly and comfortable.

There are services that provide respite care to carers and consumers. It is important to have both opportunities as while the consumer is at respite centre, the primary carer can have a break also.

Caring for the carers offering respite services assists them to stay well and improve their capacity to care for their loved ones.<sup>1</sup>

**Other Respite Centres**

**Yarrandoo Respite Centre**

This service provides respite care and the opportunity to meet others experiencing similar challenges, acquire educational tools and gain knowledge on available services  
 Phone: 02 6775 9219

**New Horizons, Central Coast**

The centre provides short term accommodation for people aged 16 and over who have an intellectual disability or mental illness, while the person who usually provides full time care takes a short break.

**Contact Joanne Murphy**

Phone: 02 4388 2739  
 Mobile: 0448 403 477

<sup>1</sup>NG16 Take Good Care of Yourself