

INFORMATION FOR AGED CARE WORKERS

Caring for older people affected by trauma: How do I look after myself?



Phoenix
AUSTRALIA

It can be challenging to support people who are affected by trauma, loss and grief. They may feel distressed, act differently, and even develop mental health issues.

For example, some people you work with may refuse to eat or do the things you need them to do because they are anxious or sad. Others may be agitated or aggressive. They may tell you stories of bad things that have happened to them that are hard to listen to.

In your work you may also experience things that are distressing, like being verbally abused by a person you are caring for, or seeing an older person being mistreated.

All of these things can affect your health and ability to cope.

"Will, one of the men I look after, has found going into a home difficult. He's been sad and withdrawn. Lately, he's been angry about everything. The other day, I tried to encourage him to get out of his room and he just started yelling at me, calling me awful names. I felt so shaken up afterwards..."

Your workplace and managers have an important role to play in helping you to stay healthy. They should ensure that you have a good work-life balance, you feel supported, and that you receive the necessary training to do your job well.

How to take care of yourself

By taking good care of yourself, you will be better able to take care of your family and the people you look after.

Talk to your workmates

- Reach out to a colleague you trust if you feel upset or confused about something that has happened at work - but take care that you don't distress them too by sharing upsetting details.
- Remember to celebrate and share your successes.

Talk to your manager about what is happening with you so they can help you get the support you need. You don't need to wait until things get really bad to ask for help.

Talk to a health care professional

if you need more help. This could be a doctor, your employee assistance program, a counsellor or psychologist.

Have some 'me time'

- Make time to relax.
- Spend time doing things you enjoy with people you care about.
- Take regular breaks at work - go for a short walk or chat to colleagues.

Look after your health

- Exercise regularly and eat a balanced diet.
- Don't drink too much alcohol or caffeine.

"I was feeling really exhausted from dealing with all the stress during COVID-19. I decided that I needed to take some 'me' time every day. So now, when I get home, I go for a walk to clear my head. It helps me to feel more relaxed and gives me some energy back..."



Useful resources and services

Nurse & Midwife Helpline
1800 667 877

Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement
1800 22 22 00