Supporting Carers of Persons with Mental Illness in the Community

The Mental Health Association

LET'S TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Who is a Carer?

A carer of a person with mental illness is someone who provides essential support and assistance to an individual struggling with mental health challenges.

This role is often filled by **family members, friends, professional caregivers, or volunteers who offer emotional, practical, and sometimes financial help.**

Carers play a crucial role in **managing daily routines, navigating treatment, and improving the overall quality of life** for those with mental illness. Their support is vital for both the well-being of the person they care for and their own,
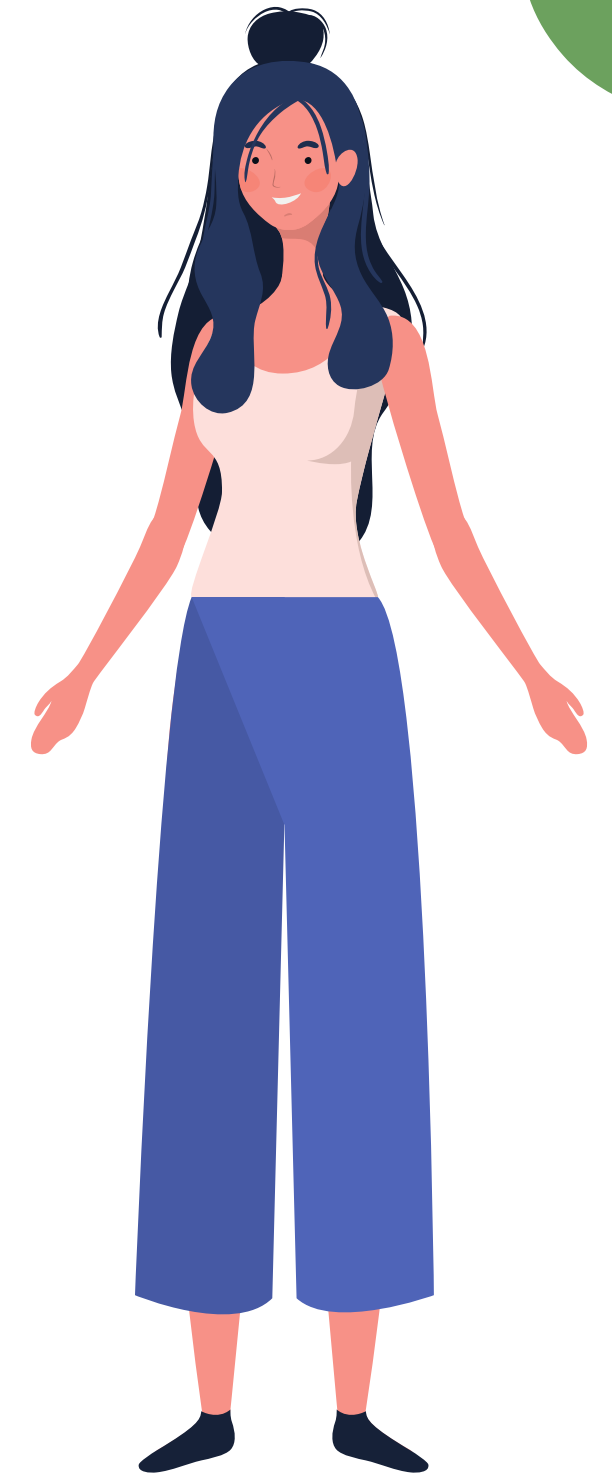
Life Difficulties for Family Members

- Families are poorly prepared to meet the increasing demands of the role.
- Parents experience stress, frustration and guilt (Hatfield and Lefley 2000)
- Spouses experience the transformation of their loved ones with strong feelings of loss and grievance (Judge 1994)
- Siblings feel neglected and ignored while they witness family stress confusion and arguments. (Jewel PHD 2007)

Current Challenges Faced by Carers (Part 1)

- **Emotional & Mental Strain:**
  - 4 in 10 carers are unable to cope with the constant anxiety of caring.
  - 1 in 3 carers are at risk of reaching breaking point
- **Financial Pressure**:
  - Carers often provide an **estimated 28 hours per week of caregiving duties** without compensation. Additionally, **93% of carers report a lack of support from their workplaces** and would greatly appreciate more assistance.
  - They need **flexible working hours to balance their job responsibilities** with caregiving duties, opportunities to reduce their work hours when necessary, and understanding during crises. **Carers also seek employers to recognize and accommodate the diverse needs of individual situations, fostering a supportive and adaptable work environment.**

Current Challenges Faced by Carers (Part 2)

- **Limited Professional Support**:
  - They have to deal with difficult behaviours that none had received advice from professionals.
  - They need professionals to identify their needs, concerns and worries.
  - They need professionals to use everyday language.
  - They ask professionals to include family perspectives in their studies.
- **Recognition**

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Importance of Supporting Carers in the Community

- **Utilize Council Facilities for Support Groups:** Providing accessible spaces makes it easier for carers to attend meetings and receive essential support.
- **Volunteer Pool Managed by the Council:** Establish a network of volunteers to assist carers with tasks like transportation, such as offering lifts to hospital appointments for non-drivers.
- **Organize Community Activities:** Facilitate social interaction for carers through events like walks, coffee mornings, and other community activities, promoting well-being and connection.
- Engage with Local Stakeholders: **Arrange meetings between carers, MPs, and councillors** to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are addressed.

The Mental Health Association

The mental Health association is a Non-Profit Organisation that supports carers and family members of persons with mental Illness.

Three Pillars of MHA

Empathy

Empowerment

Education

Educational Activities for family carers

- Annual Course
- Conferences on Mental Health
- Educational Talks on all forms of media, schools, places of work and parishes
- Screening of Films on Mental Health
- Family support services in collaboration with St Jeanne Antide Foundation
- Publication of books for school children and for relatives of persons with mental health problems, professionals/students working in this field
- Advocate for the improvement of health and social care of people with mental health problems and promote the interests of family members
- To tackle the existing stigma

THANK YOU

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