Advice about Elderly People and Aged Care Services

Referral & Information Centres (RIC)

Working out the assistance and services that are needed and/or available for elderly people can be confusing and frustrating for families and carers. In SSWAHS, there are three Referral and Information Centres (RIC) to assist family and carers to make first contact with the right people and places:

Central Cluster RIC 9211 5300
The Welfare Rights Centre provides information, assistance and advocacy for people reliant on the Social Security system.

Advice about Elderly People and Aged Care Services

Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT) Aged Care Assessment Teams are community-based services often located at or near local hospitals. They can, for example, assess if an elderly person who has dementia or is frail aged, can continue living at home, the kind of aids and services they require to do this, or the type of alternative accommodation they need.

Often both community services and residential services for elderly people require assessment by an ACAT team. However, family and carers of younger people with disabilities are advised to contact the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) first to ensure all options and information required for residential placement have been considered and that ACAT involvement is needed before approaching their local ACAT team for help. (See Disability Services in this pamphlet for DADHC contacts.)

Services for People with Dementia

Aged Care Assessment teams staff about your nearest dementia-specific services such as a Dementia Advisory Service (DAS), Dementia Support Service or respite service, or contact:

Alzheimer’s Australia on 1800 100 500 or www.alzheimers.org.au

Taking on the care of another person can result in financial pressure because of the added costs of your caring role or because you are unable to continue part or full-time work.

CentralLink (13 27 17 or www.centrallink.gov.au) provides income support (Carer Payments) and income supplement (Carer Allowance) after assessing if your caring responsibilities, costs and financial circumstances meet their eligibility criteria.

Another helpful contact is:

Welfare Rights Centre 9211 5300
The Welfare Rights Centre provides information, assistance and advocacy for people reliant on the Social Security system.

Financial Advice

Carers NSW (1800 242 636 or www.carersnsw.com.au) performs many activities for Carers. By ringing their 1800 number you can speak with a trained and experienced person about your caring situation and receive helpful advice and information about caring and services for carers.

Mental Health Services

SSWAHS Mental Health Services include in-patient services in community and major health hospitals and community mental health services (usually based in Community Health Centres).

Carer Assist Carer Assist (Ph: 9750 9744) is part of the Schizophrenia Fellowship and is the non-government organization funded to provide information, education, advocacy and support to family and carers of people with a mental illness in SSWAHS.

Disability Services

The NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (DADHC) provides community and other services to people with disabilities and their carers. Contact DADHC for more information about these services.

For people living in SSWAHS the DADHC contact numbers for information, intake and referral are either:

Metro South Office: 9334 2700
Metro North Office: 9943 9500

Another helpful contact is:

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Mental Health Services

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Call 1800 636 825 for advice and information about your local SSWAHS Mental Health Service.

Carer Assist

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Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC)

TMHC promotes access to mental health services for people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Contact 1800 648 911 or 9840 0100

For more information for Carers about SSWAHS go to: www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/sswahs/carers/

This brochure was produced by the SSWAHS Carers Program. Contact 9767 5876 for more copies.
Information for Family & Carers

A carer can be any family member or friend who provides ongoing support to children or adults who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or who are frail aged.

They may care for a few hours a week or all day, every day. Carers are not paid but may receive a modest income support supplement (Carer Payment) or supplement (Carers Allowance). Others may work or have a private income.

The person providing the most care is often called the primary carer. Being a carer may involve demands on your time and energy and new things to learn and experience. The person providing the most care is often called the primary carer. Being a carer may involve demands on your time and energy and new things to learn and experience.

Information and Support in Your Caring Role

The Social Worker

The person for whom you care can often identify a Social Worker. They are often key contacts for families – providing support, counselling and information about available services and how to access them. Ask to speak to the nurse in charge (Nursing Unit Manager) or to speak to the Social Worker.

Ask to speak to an Occupational Therapist (OT) or Physiotherapist (PT) for help in obtaining modifications and equipment for your home. Modifications may include things like installing ramps or hand rails) or equipment (e.g. walking frames, wheelchairs or showering equipment) that may help maximise the independence of the person for whom you care when they are discharged from hospital. OTs, Physiotherapists and Clinical Nurse Consultants can also advise on equipment such as ventilators, oxygen, artificial limbs and incontinence aids.

PICAAS (NSW Isolated Patients’ Travel & Accommodation Assistance Scheme) may subsidise travel and accommodation costs for patients and their carers (security) who live 100km or more from the hospital where the person is receiving specialist medical treatment not available locally either as an inpatient or outpatient. An escort must be medically necessary and the referring medical practitioner or specialist providing treatment must approve the need for an escort or escort arrangements to be considered. A co-payment applies for each claim. Ask a social worker how to apply.

Interpreters and Multicultural Services

If English is not your first language, it may help to speak to staff in your first language. Ask to staff arrange a Health Care Interpreter. You can also call the Translating and Interpreter Service (13 14 50) through charging services.

Some hospitals and community health services have bilingual staff to help you. Ask if they are available.

Information in 15 languages is also available on the 1800 052 222 website to help you. To go to www.swwhs.nsw.gov.au/SSWAHS/Careers,

Interpreters and In Other Languages

Community And Other Services To Help You

There are many services available to help you if you are caring for a person for whom you, the carer, are able to help. It can be a challenge to understand how all these services are organised. It may require you to explore the information and ask for help with the services. You can start with a Community Services Information and Referral Centre (1800 052 222) which may provide information and referral. The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre provides some respite services as well as information about regular respite services funded by other agencies in your local area. It may include details of Respite Care facilities (for longer stay respite), in-home respite and respite involving involvement in leisure and lifestyle activities for the person for whom you care.

The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre can also organise Emergency Respite. Call 1800 052 222 during normal business hours or 1800 052 059 after hours.

Taking a Break from your Caring Role

Caring for someone can be physically and emotionally exhausting. It can be a difficult decision to take some time off for care when you need a break. But taking a break usually means you are able to provide better quality care at other times.

Helping Your Hospital Experience

Hospitals can be stressful. If you have problems or wish to make a complaint, ask to speak with the person in charge of the service. Alternatively, ask to speak to a Office and Home Care Information program (HACI) is administered in NSW by the NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (DADHC). At a local level, many HACI funded agencies (e.g., Home Care Service of NSW, NSW Meals on Wheels, and Community Transport Services) can advise and arrange this assessment. Alternatively, ask if the person you care for is receiving treatment should be able to help. If not, you can contact an Aged Care Facility (eg. Residential Homes, Nursing Homes) and ask for a referral to a Community Care link Centre. They may subsidise travel and accommodation costs for patients and their carers (security) who live 100km or more from the hospital where the person is receiving specialist medical treatment not available locally either as an inpatient or outpatient. An escort must be medically necessary and the referring medical practitioner or specialist providing treatment must approve the need for an escort or escort arrangements to be considered. A co-payment applies for each claim. Ask a social worker how to apply.

Spiritual or Religious Advice

Ask your carer or a person to speak to the chaplain at the hospital. Ask to speak to the nurse in charge (Nursing Unit Manager or CNS) who can help or refer to you to a chaplain.

Information about the Person for Whom You are Caring

Before hospital staff can talk with you about the person for whom you care, they must have permission from them. Make sure this is written in their medical record by staff. If the person for whom you care is unable to give permission, ask staff about your options.

Information about the Person

For example, ask to speak to a Social Worker about your options. Alternatively, ask to speak to the social worker to discuss the options available. Alternatively, ask to speak to the social worker to discuss the options available.

Getting the help that may be available. The centre will have information about services such as domestic assistance (eg. housework), personal care (eg. showering), home modification, home management and transport as well as information about respite care.

Home & Community Care and Other Support Services

State and Commonwealth governments fund many community services. The largest of these services is the Home and Community Care (HACC) program. It is administered by the Commonwealth Department of Human Services (13 888 939) or through the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre (1800 052 222). They can provide information and referral about respite care and counselling.

Be aware that there may be waiting periods for these services. Again, a hospital Social Worker may assist you while the person for whom you care is in hospital. Once they are discharged, The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre is a good place to start.

By telephoning 1800 052 222 you will be connected to the centre closest to you. The centre will have information about services such as domestic assistance (eg. housework), personal care (eg. showering), home modification, home management and transport as well as information about respite care.

Community And Other Services To Help You

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