



More opportunities for carers in residential care

Carers are extremely valuable in residential care facilities

Some carers look for opportunities to get more involved in the facility that their family member calls home. Carers have much to offer in the way of skills, knowledge, time, ideas and 'an extra pair of hands'.

Of course, 'chipping in' doesn't happen straight away. Much of your initial energy will go directly into supporting your family member and finding your new carer role. It takes time to settle in and start feeling comfortable in the residential care facility.

The benefits of helping out around the facility

Helping out around the facility is an opportunity, not a requirement. It can help carers to expand their role and get more involved in the place, which may:

- ▣ Greatly help the facility - your family member's new home.
- ▣ Help you get to know the staff, other residents and carers.
- ▣ Help you to feel part of the place, making visiting easier.
- ▣ Make you feel useful and valued.
- ▣ Add quality to the life of your family member and other residents.

*"When I started helping out, I got to know the staff and other carers.
My help is appreciated - and it's amazing what I find out!"*

What opportunities are there?

Opportunities will vary between facilities - some are very creative. You might like to consider:

- ▣ Helping out with the activities program.
- ▣ Helping to organise a special event or celebration.
- ▣ Helping out with day-to-day tasks - e.g. meal times.
- ▣ Helping out with administrative tasks.
- ▣ Gardening.
- ▣ Fundraising.
- ▣ Getting involved in committees or groups.
- ▣ Getting to know residents who have few visitors.
- ▣ Welcoming, supporting and sharing information with carers who are new to the facility.

Joining the residents' and relatives' group is a great way to get involved and can help you learn about how things work. This group joins together to share information and provide support, look for solutions to problems and make suggestions to management. It can also give feedback on the quality of care. As part of this group, you can advocate strongly for the needs of your family member, while representing all residents.

Facilities often use the residents' and relatives' group as a way of giving information and feedback on any changes made and keeping residents and carers informed about 'facility news'.



How to start getting involved

Carers make the following suggestions:

- ▣ Think about some of the tasks you might like to get involved in.
- ▣ Speak to a senior staff member about the opportunities - make an appointment if you need to.
- ▣ Tell them about any special skills or knowledge you have.
- ▣ Ask about regular tasks that you could get involved in or take responsibility for.
- ▣ Make your own suggestions!
- ▣ Start 'chipping in' with day-to-day things when visiting.
- ▣ Look for new opportunities as they arise.
- ▣ Talk to other carers - ask for ideas.
- ▣ Join with other carers - get involved together.

Further information:

- ▣ [How to find your new carer role in residential care](#) - information sheet.

Contact the [Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre](#) on 1800 242 636* to request the above information sheet be sent to you - or to find out about other information sheets in this series.

*Free call except from mobile phones. Mobile calls at mobile rates.

We do our best to keep these links up to date, but the internet changes all the time. If you can no longer access any of the above resources, please go to our [Internet Troubleshooting Guide](#), or email us at website@carersvic.org.au