

What is respite?

Before we find out what respite is, we need to define who a carer is.

A **carer** is someone providing regular and sustained unpaid care for a relative or friend who has support needs, without payment, other than a Centrelink pension or benefit. People with support needs include those with disabilities, frail aged, mental illness or dementia. Carers come from all walks of life, from different ethnic backgrounds and are all ages. Carers often say the experience of caring is rewarding in many ways. However, caring for a relative or friend can also be very stressful and exhausting, so carers need to look after themselves.

So, what is respite?

Respite provides carers and the person they care for with a short break. Having respite helps carers find the balance between caring for others and caring for themselves.

There are various types of respite to suit individual people and situations:

In home respite is provided by a personal care worker who comes to the person's home and performs tasks the carer would normally perform, such as dressing, showering, meal preparation, shopping or keeping the person company while their carer attends appointments or social activities.

Recreational respite is respite in the form of outings, camps, day centres, retreats, overnight or weekend breaks.

Residential respite allows the person being cared for to have a short break in a respite facility where they are looked after by experienced staff.

There are different ways of organising respite depending on your situation:

Urgent respite is required when the carer is temporarily unable to perform their caring role, for example, if they need to go to hospital.

Planned respite is where regular and ongoing respite is provided to ensure the carer has a regular break from their caring role.

The benefits of respite to the carer are:

- Restores life balance and overall wellbeing
- Time for rest and relaxation
- Enhances physical and mental health
- Encourages participation in community activities
- Reconnect with family and friends
- Time to do other things.

The Northern Carers Network can assist you as a Carer to access respite through the following programs: Flexible Respite Packages, Program Respite and link you into other services that will assist you in your caring role; **Contact us on 8284 0388**

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre can provide emergency respite or short term planned respite contact **1800 522 222**