

Prioritising your wellbeing

Whether you use the words looking after your mental health or wellbeing or practising self care, the concept is often interpreted as putting yourself first or being selfish.

In fact, wellbeing is actually prioritising yourself so that you don't become unwell. That is **not** selfish, it is sensible.

Think what you are told when on a plane, "put your own mask on before attending to children". To be able to support the people you care for, you need to be strong and secure. This means taking action.

To know whether you need to prioritise your wellbeing, consider whether there has been a recent change in your emotions, thoughts and behaviour.

This might be feeling worried, anxious or your thoughts being unusually negative. It might be that you feel nothing except numb or empty. You might be finding it difficult to concentrate, care about things you enjoy doing or wanting to withdraw from everything and everyone around you.

Carers need to be cared for as well

Many carers are required to make a lot of decisions and be 'constantly available'. This is very tiring and it is important to find ways to 'switch off' when you can.

You might read a book, do an online course, join a group of like minded people or watch a show or documentary that you are interested in. Try to find time to go out whether it is a dinner and movie or meeting a friend for lunch.

It is important to ensure that you also make your physical health a priority by eating well, getting as much sleep as your body needs and getting exercise in a way that makes sense to you. You could meditate, do yoga, spend time considering what you are grateful for or volunteer in the community.

If you don't have a lot of time to go out to meet other people, perhaps you can host a zoom get together. You could spend time in nature, listen to music or explore art.

Consider writing a journal, practising deep breathing, being positive and kind to yourself and others.

Whatever you decide to do for your wellbeing, we strongly encourage you to commit to it and find someone to hold you accountable.

And of utmost importance is to ask for and accept support from others.