

# CARING FOR YOURSELF

Caring can be really special and rewarding, but sometimes it can be hard. So **it's important to care for yourself**, as well as the people you look after.

Here are some tips and ideas for keeping yourself well, written by young carers in SYC's Action Group. **How about trying one this Carers Week and seeing if it helps?**

## 1 Planning and being prepared

It's really important to plan things to look forward to with friends, family, neighbours or support workers. But sometimes life doesn't go to plan, especially if you're a young carer! So taking a few minutes to plan for things that might go wrong can really help you feel more prepared and know who to call if things ever do become difficult.

## 2 Asking for help

It's always okay to ask for help - we all need it sometimes! Remember that you're not on your own - there are people out there who can help you. (If you need support, there are some useful numbers and websites at the end of this list of tips and ideas.)

**HELP!**

## 3 Connecting with people

If you feel lonely or bored, reaching out to friends, neighbours or family really helps. Screens can be a good way to connect with people sometimes but having some time away from screens is important too. It gives us time to re-connect in other ways with the people that matter to us.



## 4 Sleep and routine

Sleep helps us feel well, physically and mentally, so it's important to get plenty. But that's not always easy when you're a young carer. Having a routine and not staying up or eating too late can help though. Exercise and connecting with other people during the day can really help with sleeping at night too. And always try to build some 'you time' into your routine.



## 5 Emotional outlets and taking time out

We all need time out sometimes, especially when life gets hectic. You could go for a walk; read a book; play an instrument; take a bath; listen to music; do some art; write stories or poems; cook (if you like cooking!); play computer games; or even scream if it helps (but remember to let people know you're OK if anyone is at home when you're screaming!). Even just 10 minutes a day focussing on yourself can make all the difference to how you feel.



## 6 Getting outdoors



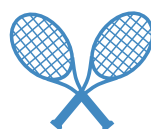
Spending time outdoors and being in nature can really help our physical and mental wellbeing too. Make sure you get outside every day, even if it's just to stand in the garden or to walk to the shop. You might not feel like it before you go (especially if it's raining!) but you'll definitely feel better afterwards. Taking notice of your surroundings while you're out and about is good too. Really noticing what you can see, hear, smell and feel can help give your mind a different focus and an important break from all your busy thoughts.

### Top tip!

**Box breathing:** Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breath out for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, then repeat up to 10 times.

Give it a go and experience its calming effects!

## 7 Activity



Exercise and movement can really help reduce anxiety, lift mood and improve self-esteem. It can also be a great way to build your confidence, connect with others, and make new friends. You might try going for a walk or jog, doing online fitness sessions, dancing, playing team sports, or enjoying active computer games. Doing at least one active thing each day is a great way to lift your mood and increase your energy levels.

8

## Having fun



Sometimes we all need to be kids and have fun too. Even when things are busy, making time to embrace a bit of fun can help everything feel so much better. So give yourself a little break and embrace the kid in you – silly movies, singing loudly, telling jokes, or playing charades or board games are all great ways to bring some smiles and laughs.

9

## Letting go / saying no

We can't always do it all. If something makes you feel stressed, say no and focus on the positives and doing the things that make you feel good instead. Or, if you can't say no, talk to other people for support – you don't have to do it on your own.



10

## Self-forgiveness and being thankful



Most importantly, be kind to yourself and show self-forgiveness. Like everybody else, you're a human and a work in progress. You might not be able to look after yourself really well every single day. And some days will feel harder than others. But if today hasn't gone well, don't dwell on it. Instead, try to think of the things that have gone well and always remember - tomorrow is a new day.

### Useful numbers and websites

If you're worried about your own or someone else's safety, call the

**Sheffield Safeguarding Hub on 0114 273 4855 (open 24 hours a day)**

For online counselling and wellbeing support for children and young people,

**visit [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)**

To talk to someone 24 hours a day if you're aged 18 or under,

**call Childline on 0800 1111 or visit [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**

To talk to someone 24 hours a day, no matter how old you are,

**call 116 123 or visit [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)**

If you're 16 or under and thinking about / have run away from home,

**call Safe@Last on 0800 335 7233 (24 hours a day)**