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Peer Group Chat

Date: 13/10/2022

Title: Caring for Yourself While Caring for Someone Else

Description: So that we are able to best support the people in our lives, it's important that we remember to care for ourselves too. This can look different for everyone and it can be tricky to navigate the balance of caring for yourself and others for the same time. Join us for a conversation around self-care, prioritising our well-being and an opportunity to share and learn from each other

Amber22 (PSW)	Hi everyone. First, we'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands we are all joining this event from. We pay deep respect to the Elders of those Countries, past and present, and we further extend that respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people joining this group tonight. Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about caring for yourself while caring for someone else.
Amber22 (PSW)	Tonight, Peer Support Workers @Amber22 and @Girasolewill be facilitating a discussion around the topic of Caring for yourself while caring for someone else. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, it's important that we remember to care for ourselves so that

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	we can best support the people in our lives. We'll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight, and it's entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. Some of the conversation may be heavy in nature as we talk about balancing caring for yourself and others at the same time. @Otter, who moderates on the SANE Forums, is working behind the scenes to ensure our safety. If you're having any technical difficulties, please see our FAQ (https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs) or message @Otter. We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn more together about caring for yourself while caring for someone else
Amber22 (PSW)	Within this group tonight we'll be talking about: - Our needs and boundaries - Making time for ourselves, and troubleshooting any barriers - Our supports
Amber22 (PSW)	We will be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join 😊
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome everyone! Feel free to introduce yourselves. I'm @Amber22.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Hi, I'm Girasole, one of the peer support workers here tonight :)
Amber22 (PSW)	Caring for others can look different for everyone. What does caring for someone else look like for you? Do you ever find that you can neglect any of your own needs while caring for others?
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Welcome @Shaz51 ! Great to see you :)
Otter (Moderator)	Hi @Shaz51 ! Welcome
Amber22 (PSW)	Hi everyone!
Shaz51	Hello @Girasole (Peer Worker) , @Amber22 (PSW) , @Otter (Moderator)
Shaz51	@Amber22 (PSW) , yes it is easy to neglect our needs when caring for others and if you are caring for more than one person

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the magician	hello people !:heart_eyes:
Otter (Moderator)	Welome @the magician !
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome! :)
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I support a few people in my life who live with complex mental health- both in ongoing ways and also periodically, e.g. in a crisis. There have certainly been times where I've prioritised the needs of the person I'm supporting over and above my own, in ways that were not sustainable. I've been able to reflect and learn from these occasions though, to ensure the person is still supported as needed, but that my own important needs are being met as well.
Shaz51	Yes @Girasole (Peer Worker) , I am learning
the magician	there were times growing up with a nasty step dad i had to remove my mothers needs from my own not coping and accept she was a big girl. now i don't have someone to care for other than being generally caring but i imagine caring for a pet is enough for me. with partners of MH im very supportive and patient.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	@Shaz51 I think it's a wonderful thing to be on the process of learning and growing :)
the magician	i like to help friends with the NDIS and their need what they are entitled to as navigating that im particularly good at
Amber22 (PSW)	Self-care relates to looking after our own needs. What needs of yours are important to be met?
the magician	to be able to talk about stuff clarify without dumping on problems or being perceived as anxious.
Shaz51	Sometimes it is still hard and other emotions come in like guilt @Girasole (Peer Worker) but I have had to put mum in residential aged care as it is becoming harder according to the doctors with my physical problems and my husband mental health
the magician	my needs are to not overstress with study goals and commitments.

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Amber22 (PSW)	I completely agree @the magician ! It is definitely important to not stress too much over certain goals that we would like to achieve, and make sure that we are taking baby steps to achieve these goals
Girasole (Peer Worker)	@Shaz51 I can totally understand that, those situations can be difficult. There can be times where we approach or reach our limits, and we just can't sustainably do it anymore. Or we could, but at what cost? Put ourselves at risk of harm? It sounds like it was a challenging period, but ultimately what had to happen to be sustainable – so I'm glad you actively valued you & your husband's needs & health too in that decision-making process ;purple_heart:
the magician	it can be difficult . do i take the most efficient route or do i take the high road and explore more. how much time do i have in a day and what is practical.
Otter (Moderator)	Welcome @Just.me!
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Hi @just.me! :) Welcome
Amber22 (PSW)	While caring for others, has a boundary ever been overstepped for you? If so, how did you respond– did you make that boundary clearer? Or did this help you realise a new boundary needed to be created and communicated?
Girasole (Peer Worker)	To answer the previous question btw, I was going to say sleep is a big one. I just can't function well (for myself or for anyone I'm supporting) if my sleep needs aren't being met. Respite is another one– I don't know if anyone can sustainably be in a caring mode 24/7 –especially if, like me, you're also managing your own complex mental health. I certainly need time to have a break from caring–related responsibilities.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	For this question: I realised how important sleep was to me when I once opted to support a loved one through suicidal crisis in the early hours of the morning when I'd normally be asleep. At the time I felt like there were no other options for this person, but I came to appreciate afterwards that there could've been others willing to support who were awake at the time, or otherwise specialised mental health and suicide services that operate 24/7. Learning how

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	responsibility can be shared more helped me establish that boundary around sleep, and it was also a helpful learning generally.
Amber22 (PSW)	I agree @Girasole (Peer Worker) , sometimes sharing responsibility is a lot better as it's easier on us as carers, and also might give them a chance to get proper trained help.
the magician	i had sleep issues for 25 years for a number of functional anxiety reasons it wasn't until i addressed those needs in other ways and changed my sleep clock. it was easier to get up at 6.30 am rather than 8 and go to bed at 9.30 instead of 11. it was like a magic pill almost.
Shaz51	Amm @Amber22 (PSW) not sure if this is right but my cousins interfered with mum medical team about me caring for mum against the doctors orders , so had to the EPOA for mum which is me
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Hi @FightingforLOVE! Welcome :)
the magician	@Shaz51 whats an EPOA?
Shaz51	@the magician enduring power of attorney
Amber22 (PSW)	Ah very interesting! @Shaz51
Otter (Moderator)	Welcome @FightingForLOVE!
the magician	and your cousins wanted to take over that? sounds invading.
Shaz51	Yes @the magician , @Amber22 (PSW) , but they were not going to support me looking after my mum at home
Amber22 (PSW)	If you were to take the time to ensure your needs are also being met, what would the impact of that look like in your life?
the magician	i would feel as intelligent as my family and not just crazy whacky auntie/sister

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the magician	more calm
Amber22 (PSW)	I think I would feel a lot more relaxed and content
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I think that would best support my wellbeing generally; it would be the most sustainable. It would also give me the best possible chance of being able to function at any given time, instead of being sleep-deprived or on-edge - these can have knock-on effects that otherwise can deteriorate our health. So on the other side of that - our health and wellbeing would be better supported
Shaz51	@Amber22 (PSW) we have cut back on our workload to help with our needs ,
Amber22 (PSW)	Thats great to hear! @Shaz51
the magician	pacing self and giving breaks is important
Amber22 (PSW)	How do you prioritise/navigate making time for yourself around caring for others?
the magician	ive cut back from 6 classes to three and other extensive activities so i don't go over my stress threshold and have symptoms. one thing im learning to do is have intrinsic goals instead of external ones.
the magician	immediate family and social hour or time
Shaz51	@Amber22 (PSW) by just working in the mornings , visiting mum a couple of days a week for an hour , listening to our bodies
Amber22 (PSW)	Thats great, I think that cutting back so that you can have time for you is so important. Rest is productive too! @the magician
Amber22 (PSW)	Lovely :) @Shaz51
the magician	bill gates once said something very affective about giving a job to a lazy person because they'll probably find an easier way to do it.
Amber22 (PSW)	Haha thats great! @the magician

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Girasole (Peer Worker)	A few responses here about listening to our bodies, I like that! To avoid pushing ourselves, we need to pay attention to mental & physical signs that we are starting to not cope, and respecting those signs reflecting our underlying needs
Shaz51	Sometimes it can be tricky @Girasole (Peer Worker)
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I think it can often be through our experiences that pushed us beyond our comfort, where we learn what our needs really are. Once we know what we need, and we see it as important that those needs are met, I find it can then be reasonably straightforward to communicate that to someone (e.g. the time I need for myself) – if you feel they will respect what you say. In saying that, I would find it helpful – and this is something I can have conversations with others about – for someone to offer me choices that anticipate my needs around time, instead of just asking for one specific thing. E.g. "Hey, could you spend tomorrow with me? Or perhaps just part of the day, if a whole day is too much?" instead of just "Hey, could you spend tomorrow with me?" I find it harder to advocate for my needs if just one thing is presented to me as the only possible option, which makes me feel like I'd be causing disappointment for offering something still supportive but slightly different, based on what's sustainable
Amber22 (PSW)	Do you find that there are any barriers to making time for yourself? If so, maybe we could think together about some possible solutions?
Girasole (Peer Worker)	For me a barrier is simply the limited free time I can have. But that doesn't mean I don't have any time – I'd like to be more mindful and intentional with the limited spare time I do have, so that I can get the most out of it. For example, doing things that actively bring me the most joy or comfort.
the magician	i live alone and have an understanding family. have just started making the post covid effort to make friends and a social life isn't a problem for me right now. im also very organised good at planning and organising people. im one of those busy people you might ask how to create time.
Shaz51	Unexpected circumstances, family members, the weather @Amber22 (PSW)
the magician	learning to be flexible

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Girasole (Peer Worker)	@the magician I for one would love to hear some of your ideas on how to create time! :smile:
the magician	its literally an admin time scheduling. not commuting is huge. having access to things in close proximity. dividing your life and what you do with it like a pie.
Shaz51	@Girasole (Peer Worker) , create time for us is doing basic jobs at home out of the way and then you have time to relax
Amber22 (PSW)	It can be really important to have support and care for yourself while you are supporting and caring for others. What support do you have around you for yourself?
FightingForLOVE	How do you deal with endless fury because of the stress and insults and everything about your partners condition- everything BUT him - constantly letting you down, excluding you or just generally making you made as heck?
Shaz51	Amm @Amber22 (PSW) none
the magician	i have a 7year career strategy that's a bit like a COVID strategy or patient strategy by a DR'S clinic. So i have clear supports my mother Band-Aid. sister and brother advice. second sister offers a country retreat. i use both psychiatrist and psychologist. plus a great support coordinator.
the magician	no expectations and no assumptions patience and support @FightingForLOVE
the magician	burn off some of that stress daily too.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	@FightingForLOVE that sounds so difficult to be navigating - it sounds like, if you don't have any already, I think having some professional support for yourself could be really helpful. An ongoing, supportive space to vent, or brainstorm ideas to set up boundaries, or to develop abilities for advocating - it sounds like too much to handle alone and stay sane- or at least I'd feel that way if I were in your shoes! Have you got any supports for yourself?
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I could probably have more conversations with my loved ones about this kind of stuff, because so many provide care for others- whether that's related to mental health, age, disability, etc. Feeling alone and not having many conversations about the caring experience is probably a recipe for limited learning & growth, and so perhaps more

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	struggle than otherwise. I've also been slowly learning about more and more professional supports out there specifically for carers :)
FightingForLOVE	My biggest issue has been the stress larded on by every ignorant, stupid, infuriating twit out there from the people at the shelter to even his mother. The people climbing to help and even silly tec issues. How do I stop it all from making me scream?
the magician	saying no i cant deal with this now im going for a walk. we'll discuss this again when youre being reasonable?
FightingForLOVE	No I have no support that's half the reason why I'm so mad I keep asking and looking but all I get are runarounds and platitudes
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I find in situations like that @FightingForLOVE it's so valuable to just connect with other sane people and vent about it all. This can be with trusted people in your own life, or with services such as Listening Ear (a phone line) or Lifeline. For carer-specific services by the way, Carer Gateway is national and offers all kinds of support including respite, counselling and peer support. In your local state, there are often carer support groups - have a look through Google and see what comes up in your area :) It's also good to know that a lot of mental health support lines also exist to support carers too - e.g. Blue Knot, Butterfly Foundation, SANE
Shaz51	@FightingForLOVE my husband has cancelled all help and won't except any help any more
FightingForLOVE	Tried them all. I either don't qualify or they hang up if I'm so much as upset let alone vent
the magician	GP can be a good support for referrals . for yourselves and letting go that partners aren't wanting direct help right now. it might take them a while to come around
FightingForLOVE	Shaz51 I'm not surprised I'm at my wits end too I hate the word "help" because it all seems like a lie anytime someone says it. I've got "PTSD" from hearing the false word help spoken I have panick attacks wounding what push me of the proverbial cliff is this "help" going to do to me now
FightingForLOVE	I still maintain good real help is out there I just can't find it for me

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Girasole (Peer Worker)	Hey everyone we're just about to wrap up for the night, but I'm aware there could be a lot of value in continuing the conversation - please feel free to create a new thread on the Forums to continue the conversation and support there :)
Amber22 (PSW)	Tonight's topic may have brought up some heavy feelings as we talked about caring for other people and balancing this with caring for ourselves too. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do? 😊
Amber22 (PSW)	Here are some further resources we recommend having a look at: 1: Looking After Yourself https://www.carergateway.gov.au/looking-after-yourself 2: Prevent Carer Burnout https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyeSbGBAmpl 3: Carer Gateway Forums https://forum.carergateway.gov.au/s/
Shaz51	@FightingForLOVE , love to see you on the sane forum to share your story
Amber22 (PSW)	Yes definitely, please do share on the forums if you feel comfortable! @FightingForLOVE
the magician	I've always found private psychiatrist's and clinical psychologists most effective. then maybe a social worker for practical stuff. good luck with it.
Otter (Moderator)	I'm going to have an unashamedly lazy night, Bill Gates-style
Amber22 (PSW)	Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion 😊 If you'd like to be informed when our next Peer Group Chat will be taking place, you can sign up to our mailing list here https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat. You can also ask questions for us to discuss in future peer chats!
the magician	bye everyone!
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I'm looking forward to a nice dinner afterward :)

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Girasole (Peer Worker)	Take care everyone! Look after yourselves - you deserve it :)
Otter (Moderator)	Thanks everyone! Wishing the best and take care
Amber22 (PSW)	Thanks everyone :) Have a good night!
Shaz51	Shower and a cuppa here @Girasole (Peer Worker) , @Amber22 (PSW) , @FightingForLOVE , @the magician
Shaz51	Ohh and @Otter (Moderator) my best friend
Otter (Moderator)	Awww day made @Shaz51 ! Take care all the very best!