

# Living Caring Working

IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE WITH A LIFE THREATENING ILLNESS,  
THEIR FAMILIES, CARERS AND COMMUNITIES

## RESOURCE 9 | Conversation with your managers and employers— in your role as a carer

Below is a list of topics you may wish to discuss with your employer or manager to help them understand your needs while caring for a family member or friend.

Remember that what and how much to wish to share with your manager or employer is your choice and your employer is obliged to maintain your confidentiality.

### Caring for your family member/friend

1. Explain the nature of the illness and its likely progression.
2. Think about how the symptoms of the illness and the potential side effects of treatments may impact on your family member and the implications for your caring role and your ability to work. Explain this to your employer.
3. Explain the tasks you undertake as a carer, for example:
  - home nursing care
  - purchasing and administering medication
  - preparing appropriate meals or nourishment
  - personal assistance with bathing, dressing, feeding, mobility around the home
  - transport and assistance in getting to the doctor, medical appointments or hospital.
4. Think about what aspects of your caring role and your family member/friend's illness you give permission for your manager/employer to share with your work colleagues.

### Working arrangements

5. Think about how much time accompanying your family member to doctors' appointments and treatments might take. Tell your employer or manager.
6. If you think it might be necessary, ask about your organisation's policies on:
  - part-time work
  - job sharing
  - working from home
  - flexible working hours/flexible rostering arrangements/swapping shifts
  - accruing time to take longer breaks to meet appointments
  - compressed working week
  - leave without pay.

Raising these issues with your manager or employer may help you identify your options.

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## Benefits to your employer

Although you might feel uncomfortable about asking your manager or employer for flexibility to undertake your caring role, providing flexible working arrangements for carers can benefit a business or organisation in a number of ways:

- improved ability to attract and retain skilled employees
- reduced staff resignations and savings in recruitment and training costs
- reduced absenteeism if employees can take a few hours off work instead of a whole day
- increased staff morale, loyalty, commitment, productivity and performance
- enhanced public image as an employer who cares about employees' commitments and contributes to the well being of the community.

## Look at the following documents for more information.

[http://www.docep.wa.gov.au/lr/LabourRelations/Content/Work\\_Life\\_Balance/Work\\_and\\_Family/Pages/Creating%20Carer%20Frien.html](http://www.docep.wa.gov.au/lr/LabourRelations/Content/Work_Life_Balance/Work_and_Family/Pages/Creating%20Carer%20Frien.html)

[http://www.workandfamily.nsw.gov.au/resources/familyguide\\_febo3.pdf](http://www.workandfamily.nsw.gov.au/resources/familyguide_febo3.pdf)