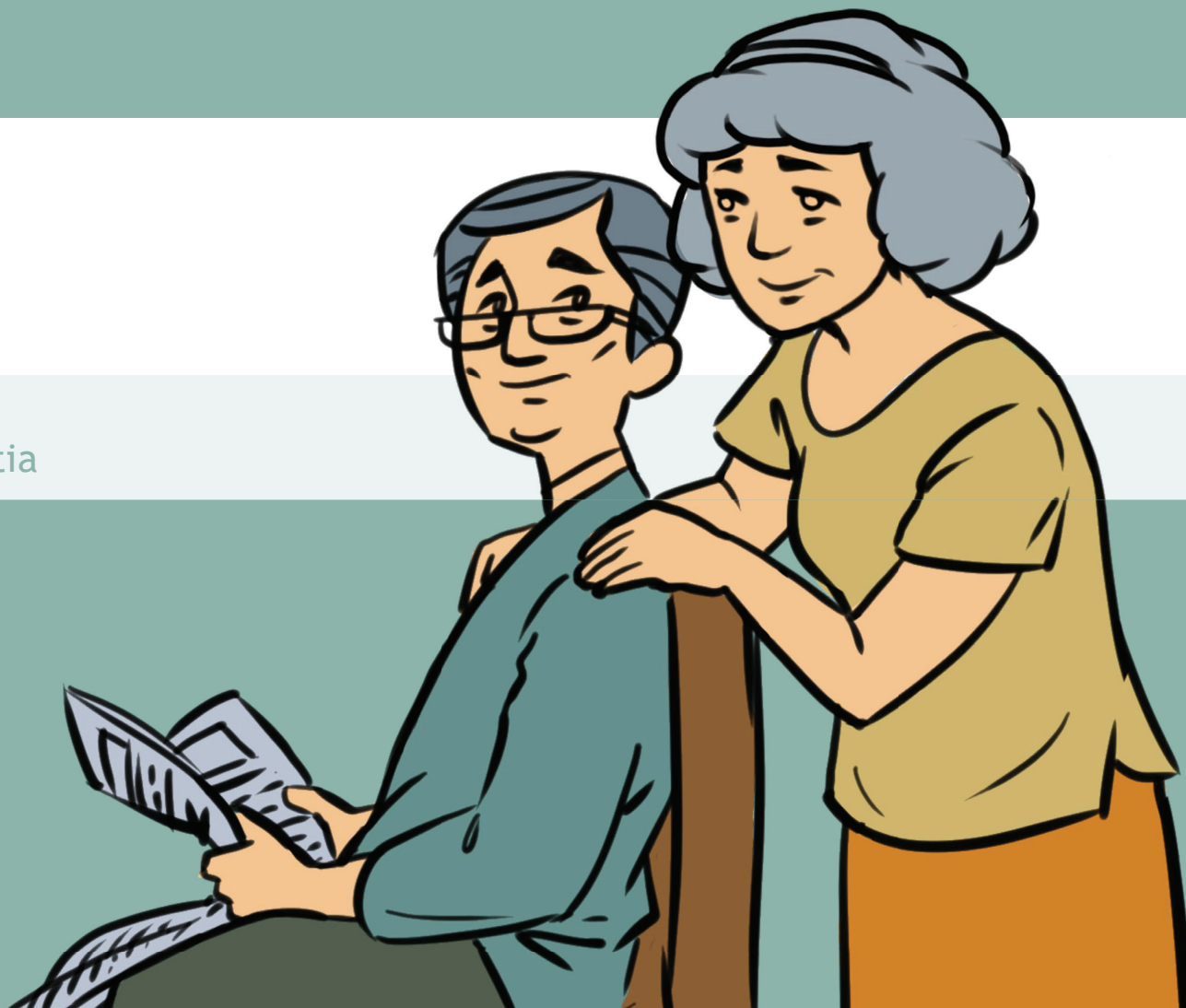


Australian version

iSupport For Dementia

Training and support manual
for carers of people with dementia



Unit 2. Making time for pleasant activities

Making time for pleasant activities

Why is this unit important?

It is important to take care of yourself while caring for another person. This unit will help you to keep providing care.

How will this unit help me?

This unit will help you to take time for yourself and do pleasant activities to relax.

What will I learn?

- The importance of pleasant activities
- What prevents you from doing pleasant activities
- How to make pleasant activities achievable
- Suggestions for doing pleasant activities alone or together.

The importance of pleasant activities

Pleasant activities are important because caregiving can last a long time and doing pleasant activities can help you to relax and continue caring.

Pleasant activities can be small things such as going for a walk or talking to a friend.

This may not always be easy, because providing care can be time-consuming and someone might have to take over the care for the person while you are not there.



The importance of pleasant activities

Let's see how Amy, Joe and Jim experience caregiving and the importance of planning pleasant activities.

Amy

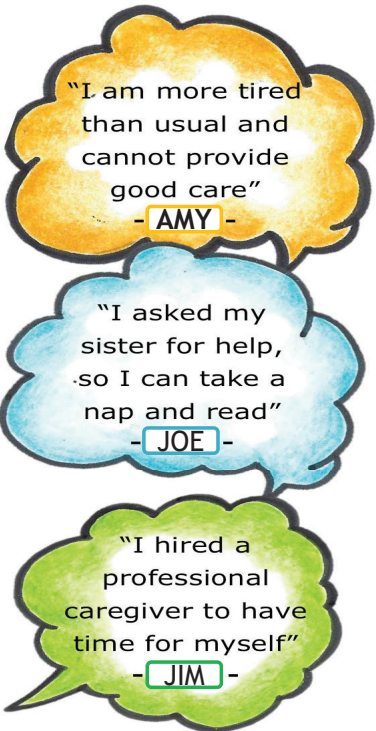
Amy takes care of her mother who is living with dementia. She dedicates most of her time to caregiving and rarely takes time for herself. She does not engage in any pleasant activities. Amy notices that recently she is more tired than usual and feels that she is not able to care for her mother as she did before.

Joe

Joe takes care of his brother who is living with dementia. Joe does not get a lot of sleep and rarely has time for afternoon naps. He recently started asking his sister to come by and help with caregiving so he can take a nap and read a magazine each afternoon.

Jim

Jim takes care of his wife who is living with dementia. Recently, he has hired a professional carer who stops by three times a week to help him care for his wife. When the professional carer is there, Jim reads the newspaper or goes for a walk.



Keep in Mind



- If you are not able to make time for yourself, you can get very tired or stressed which may make you less able to care for the person living with dementia.
- You can ask family and friends to help care for the person, so you can take some time for yourself.
- If it is affordable, you could hire a professional carer to help you care for the person so you can take some time for yourself.
- Find out if you are eligible for Government subsidised aged care services at home. See the My Aged Care website for information about help at home services or phone them for information on 1800 200 422 Mon-Fri 8am - 8pm sat 10am - 2pm.



Which pleasant activities would you like to do?

Once you have some time for yourself it can be hard to think of the things you would like to do. There are many possibilities and even in a short amount of time, you can still do an activity you like.

In this exercise you will make a list of the pleasant activities you would like to do. Pick at least two activities you would like to do more often (if your favourite activity is not listed below, use the 'other' button at the bottom of the list and add your own activity).

Activity



- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do a crossword puzzle | <input type="checkbox"/> Take a nap |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watch TV | <input type="checkbox"/> Go shopping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visit friends or family | <input type="checkbox"/> Take a walk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cook | <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do crafts | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read | _____ |

Let’s look at your pleasant activities below:

Activity Answer:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Do a crossword puzzle	<input type="checkbox"/> Take a nap
<input type="checkbox"/> Watch TV	<input type="checkbox"/> Go shopping
<input type="checkbox"/> Visit friends or family	<input type="checkbox"/> Take a walk
<input type="checkbox"/> Cook	<input type="checkbox"/> Exercise
<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Do crafts	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Read	_____

Are you aware of the pleasant activities you like to do?
And do you know which activities you want to do more often?

What prevents you from doing pleasant activities?

Providing care becomes increasingly more difficult if you do not take time for yourself every now and then. Let’s go back to Amy’s example.

Amy dedicates most of her time to caring for her mother who has dementia. She does not receive any help and is tired all the time. She is struggling to care for her mother and has stopped doing the things she likes because she feels she does not have enough time.

Eventually, Amy is so tired she decides to ask for help from her friend. She is now able to make some time for herself and undertake some pleasant activities. Amy feels more energised after the pleasant activities and feels she is better able to handle the care for her mother as a result.




Other reasons you may feel unable to do pleasant activities

Not having time was the reason that Amy did not feel she could do any pleasant activities.

However, there are several other reasons.

Do you recognise any of the following? Click on one of them and drop them in the box for advice on how to deal with them.

Activity 

- ☐ **Guilt:** You might feel guilty because you will feel you are leaving the person you care for.
- ☐ **No energy:** You might have less energy because caregiving can be tiring.
- ☐ **No money:** You might think you have to spend lots of money to do something pleasurable.
- ☐ **Not in the mood:** You might not feel like doing pleasant activities.
- ☐ **Physical limitations:** You might think that if you have physical limitations, you are not able to do a pleasant activity.
- ☐ **No time:** You might feel that you are too busy and not able to find any spare time.

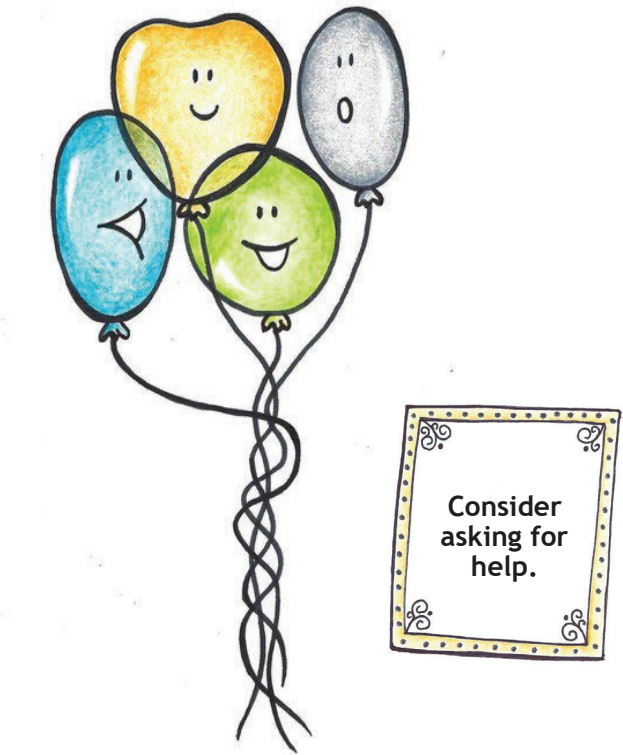
Activity Feedback



- **Guilt:** You might feel guilty because you will feel you are leaving the person you care for. You need time to do things you like, to relax and recharge so you can provide adequate care for them. Being a good carer means taking care of yourself as well.
- **No energy:** You might have less energy because caregiving can be tiring. Although it is hard to imagine, it is likely that you will feel more energised after doing something you like.
- **No money:** You might think you have to spend lots of money to do something pleasurable. Pleasant activities do not have to be costly. You can keep the activities as simple as you want them to be. For example, things like meeting a friend for a cup of tea or going for a walk by yourself do not cost money.
- **Not in the mood:** You might not feel like doing pleasant activities. Although it is hard to imagine, it is likely that your mood will be better after doing something you like. On the other hand, not doing pleasant activities will likely worsen your mood.
- **Physical limitations:** You might think that if you have physical limitations, you are not able to do a pleasant activity. If you have physical limitations, think of activities that you can do despite your limitations. There are many possibilities, such as reading, playing a game or talking to a friend.
- **No time:** You might feel that you are too busy and not able to find any spare time. It is really important that you try to make some time during the day or in the evening to do something you enjoy. If you have little time, there are some pleasant activities that do not take up a lot of time and which you can fit in around your day.

Suggestions for doing pleasant activities

- Consider asking someone to help you with some of your day-to-day tasks.
- Consider the impact of not doing certain tasks at that moment. For example, what is the impact of not cleaning the house every day? You may realise you can be more flexible and have more time as a result.
- Try to do one activity at a time and finish the things you have started as much as possible. If you leave something unfinished, it may make you feel dissatisfied. You may not be able to focus entirely on your next activity. You could feel more energised if you complete an activity before taking on another.
- Think about ways to better manage your time. Consider using an agenda or calendar. Talk to someone about how you might be able to manage your time better. Seeking another opinion or suggestions may be helpful.



Making pleasant activities achievable

Activity	not achievable	Unlikely to be achievable	Somewhat achievable	Achievable	Very achievable
<div><input type="checkbox"/> Do a crossword puzzle</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Watch TV</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Visit friends or family</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Cook</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Do crafts</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Read</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Take a nap</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Go shopping</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Take a walk</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Exercise</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</div>					



Keep in Mind



- Start with small goals and add more pleasant activities after you feel successful with your first try.
- Rethink the activities you would like to do to help increase their achievability.

Which of your activities can you do today?

It would be a good idea to start with your pleasant activities as soon as possible and establish them as part of your routine.

Which of your activities can you do today? If it is inconvenient to start an activity today, think about the pleasant activities you could do tomorrow.

Remember:

- Pleasant activities should be achievable.
- There are different reasons why you can feel that pleasant activities are not achievable.
- There are ways to do pleasant activities despite these reasons.

What prevents you from doing pleasant activities?

It can be very rewarding to do these activities together with the person you care for as well. However, it might be difficult at first to come up with pleasant activities that are suitable for both you and for the person you care for.

In this exercise, we will make a list of the pleasant activities you may be able to do with the person you care for. First, we take a look at the experience of Joe from the previous exercise.



Joe

Joe takes care of his brother who is living with dementia.

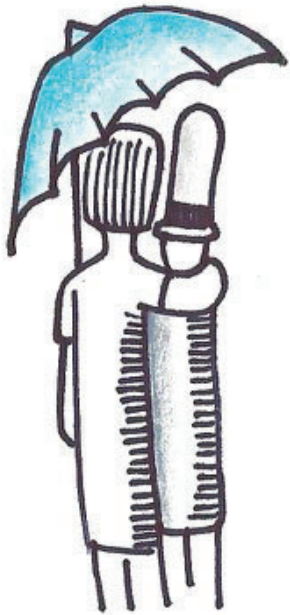
In addition to taking a nap while his sister takes care of his brother, Joe takes his brother out for walks around the neighbourhood. His brother enjoys the walk and Joe is able to get some exercise and fresh air too.

What would you like to do more often?

Take a look at the list below for examples you can do with the person you care for.

Pick at least one activity you would like to do more often with the person you care for.
If an activity is not listed below, add the activity you would like to do.

Activity	
<i>List of examples:</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch birds or animals
<input type="checkbox"/> Play a musical instrument	<input type="checkbox"/> Do handiwork or crafts
<input type="checkbox"/> Take a relaxing walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Look at photos
<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to or read stories, newspaper articles, poems, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch the clouds or explore nature
<input type="checkbox"/> Go out to eat together	<input type="checkbox"/> Recall and discuss happy memories
<input type="checkbox"/> Cook and prepare snacks	<input type="checkbox"/> Have friends over to visit
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

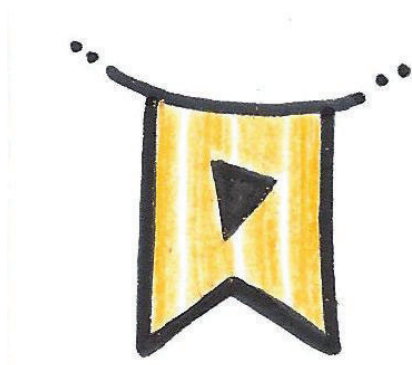


Congratulations, you have completed this Unit!

Keep in mind that despite the challenges, pleasant activities are good for you and are necessary to ensure that you are able to keep providing care for the person you care for.

RELATED LEARNING UNITS

- Module 3 Unit 3 Thinking differently
- Module 4 Unit 2 Eating, drinking and preventing health problems
- Module 5 Unit 4 Difficulty sleeping



Carer support groups can offer you a safe place to talk about your role as a carer. They can put you in touch with other carers who may be experiencing similar things to you so you can share advice and suggestions to support each other.

Carer support groups can sometimes be organised around specific caring roles and the situation of the person you care for. For information call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422.

Carer Support Groups



You finished this unit, well done!