

# About you: Respite care

**This help sheet provides practical suggestions for people living with dementia to plan and use respite services.**

Respite means taking a break and can take many forms, to suit your needs. It can range from a few hours to a few days or longer. Respite care can be arranged on a regular or occasional basis, or in emergency situations.

Respite can be an opportunity for you to enjoy new relationships and meaningful social activities away from your family or carer. It can take place in your own home or elsewhere.

Respite can also support your family or carer to work, or support their own wellbeing through leisure time and interests.

## Types of respite care

- In-home respite, with a care worker coming to your home during the week, weekend, or overnight. They may also accompany you to an activity you enjoy.
- Out-of-home respite, with group activities in local day centres. These offer planned care and social engagement from a few hours to several days a week, with some offering extended hours, weekend or overnight care.
- Residential care respite, with temporary overnight stays of several days or longer.

There are government-funded respite programs depending on needs, eligibility and what services are available in your area.

Your local council, state or territory government may also offer respite care.

Respite is also available from respite care services, including church and community groups.

## **Tips when considering respite**

It is important to prioritise your needs and goals when thinking about respite. You should have choice and control over the planning and delivery of respite services.

Things to consider:

- Whether the service is available when you want it and for the length of time you would like.
- Whether the activities, group members and staff match your personal interests and hobbies.
- If the location is safe and the atmosphere is also safe, friendly and supportive.
- How your individual interests and wellbeing are assessed, supported, discussed and reviewed.
- Booking in advance if you can, because there may be a waiting time.
- That services cater for you if you are from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community, have a diverse cultural background and/or speak a language other than English, or if you are from the LGBTI community.

## **Adjusting to respite**

It may take time to feel confident and comfortable using respite services. It can help to:

- Talk with others about their experiences.
- Take short respite breaks before having longer ones.
- Share your initial experience with your respite worker, to help you get to know each other.

If you are not happy with the respite service, talk to the service provider as there may be something that can be easily adjusted, or you may want to consider different respite options.

## **Building partnerships with staff**

You can build relationships with staff by sharing information about yourself, such as:

- your likes and dislikes
- ways you prefer to do things
- how you react to stress and what can help
- significant life events
- medical issues
- your medications
- any emergency arrangements.

## **Respite services in your area**

To find out what respite services are available in your area, contact:

- National Dementia Helpline  
Call: **1800 100 500**
- My Aged Care  
Call: **1800 200 422**
- Veterans' Home Care Assessment Agency  
Call: **1300 550 450**
- If you are living with younger onset dementia, find out about respite services funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)  
Call: **1800 800 110**  
Visit: [ndis.gov.au](http://ndis.gov.au)

## Complaints

If you want to raise any concerns about a respite service, it is best to speak directly with the service provider. It may be something that can be resolved quickly. Alternatively, you may want to consider different respite options.

If your concerns remain unresolved, you can contact:

- If you receive an Australian Government funded aged care service:  
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission  
Call: **1800 951 822**  
Visit: [agedcarequality.gov.au](https://agedcarequality.gov.au)
- If you receive support through the NDIS:  
The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission  
Call: **1800 035 544**  
Visit: [ndiscommission.gov.au](https://ndiscommission.gov.au)

## Additional reading and resources

- Dementia Australia library service  
Visit: [dementia.org.au/library](https://dementia.org.au/library)
- Dementia Australia support  
Visit: [dementia.org.au/support](https://dementia.org.au/support)
- Dementia Australia education  
Visit: [dementia.org.au/education](https://dementia.org.au/education)

### Further information

Dementia Australia offers support, information, education and counselling.

**National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500**

**For language assistance: 131 450**

**Visit our website: [dementia.org.au](https://dementia.org.au)**