



Carers guide

A practical guide to support ACU staff to balance their work and caring responsibilities

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Acknowledgment of Country

ACU acknowledges and pay our respects to the First Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways. We recognise their spiritual and ongoing cultural connection to Country. We respectfully acknowledge Elders past and present and thank them for their wisdom and guidance as we walk in their footsteps.

A prayer for balance

From the ACU Book of Prayer:

Lord Jesus,

I ask that you help me to create a healthy balance in all aspects of my life.

Give me the knowledge and understanding I need to manage and complete my daily tasks, yet still make time for you, O Lord.

Fill my heart with gratitude, kindness and perseverance in all that I do for you and with you, O Lord.

Give me the balance I need, to care for and help not only myself but all those around me, through your loving and compassionate heart.

I pray for a beautiful balance between having faith in all your work and faithfulness in all my work.

I ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

Introduction

Our motto *‘Truth in Love’* is mission fused with the search for truth through faith, reason with love, and care for neighbour and creation. All of us at ACU can play a part in the mission of care by showing respect and empathy to others, and supporting colleagues who have personal carer responsibilities.

In our society, the role of carers is more prevalent and impactful than people realise. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that three million Australians (11.9 per cent of the population) are carers who provide informal unpaid assistance to others while managing the demands of their paid work and family responsibilities¹. This means one in every eight Australians¹ spend an average 36 hours per week² providing care, with the actual number of hours depending on personal circumstances. A significant number of these individuals experience additional physical and emotional pressures in their everyday lives due to the provision of this care.

This guide provides staff and supervisors with practical information and support that aligns with our mission, policies and relevant legislative obligations. It is acknowledged that the workplace is one component of the ‘whole person’, so external resources and support are also included to assist staff with their everyday caring journeys.

**“Do all you can to assist and love one another” ~ St Mary Mackillop (1890)
Patron saint of Australian Catholic University**

¹Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2022 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC)

²CEO, Carers Australia

Carers

Definition of carer

The [Carer Recognition Act 2010 \(Commonwealth\)](#) [the “Act”] defines a carer as *an individual who provides personal care, support and assistance to another individual who needs it because that other individual:*

- (a) has a disability;*
- (b) medical condition (including terminal or chronic illness); or*
- (c) has a mental illness;*
- (d) is frail and aged.*

The Act states that an individual is not a carer if they provide [care]:

- under a contract of service or a contract for the provision of services;
- in the course of doing voluntary work for a charitable, welfare or community organisation; or
- as part of the requirements of a course of education or training.

Who are carers?

Carers are individuals with caring responsibilities as defined under the Act. Carers can be parents, partners, children, siblings and friends who provide informal unpaid care, support and assistance to a member of their immediate family or household.

The nature of care provided will be specific to the family or household member’s needs, and can arise:

- gradually due to a chronic or debilitating illness or condition, ageing parents or partner, alcohol and other drug dependency
- quite suddenly due to unexpected illness, injury, accident, or the birth of a child.

Frequency of the care can be sporadic or frequent, and for a temporary or permanent period. The intensity of care may increase or decrease over time as a result of the family or household member’s age, health and other related factors.

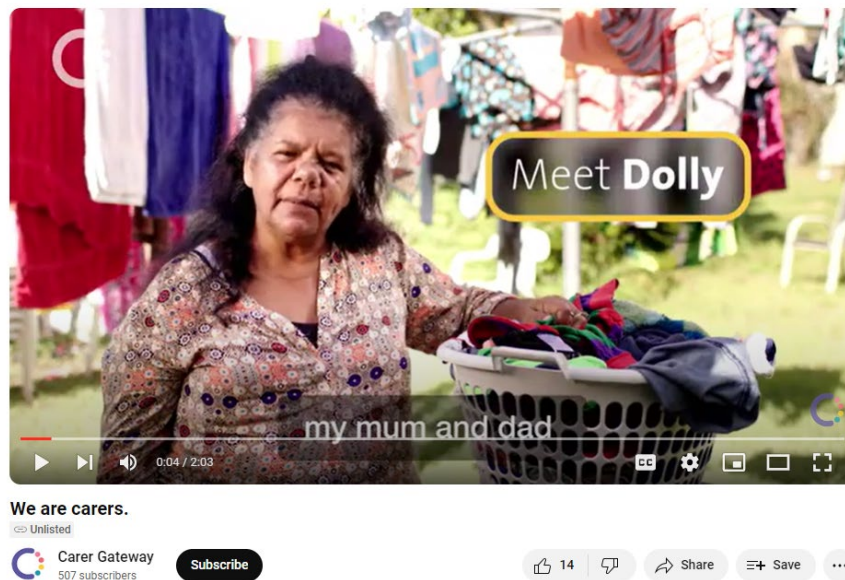
Not all caregivers will disclose their caring responsibilities in the workplace. This could be because they:

- don’t feel comfortable or safe to share personal information
- have concerns about how it could impact their career or perception in the workplace
- because they absorb the responsibilities as part of their typical family activities without accessing workplace support
- are impacted by cultural expectations within their communities regarding the provision of care (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) and they may feel is not appropriate to share in the workplace.

Caring responsibilities can place additional pressure on the person providing care. This can impact their own personal health and wellbeing, which is often not prioritised over that of their family or household member’s. Refer to page 8 for information and options for staff

and supervisors to consider when discussing balancing work and carer responsibilities, and page 12 for resources to assist with self-care.

For more information about ‘who are carers’ visit [Carer Gateway](#), an Australian Government program offering free services, support and resources to carers and their families. Watch [We are carers](#) for a snapshot into the lives of everyday Australian carers and the types of tasks they perform.



What do carers do?

Carers assist with physical, practical, emotional and wellbeing tasks such as:

- providing daily living support including grooming, hygiene, housework and home safety, cooking, gardening, exercise, companionship and pet care
- assisting with personal tasks such as medication management, scheduling appointments and grocery shopping
- providing transportation and attending health appointments, family occasions, social groups and outings
- managing personal, family, legal and financial affairs
- attending to emergency health and domestic situations including trips, falls, health-related episodes, refrigerator breaks down, disrupted electrical and telephone services.

Carer's rights

Under the [National Employment Standards \(NES\)](#) of the [Fair Work Act 2009 \(Commonwealth\)](#) you are entitled to access personal carer's leave and to request a flexible work arrangement to provide care or support to a member of your immediate family or household who requires care or support because of a personal illness, injury or unexpected emergency.

There are also protections under the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Commonwealth\)](#), [Carer Recognition Act 2010](#) and state or territory-based anti-discrimination legislation against being treated differently or less favourably due to caring responsibilities. Caring should not be a barrier to professional work, promotion, education and training opportunities, and employment terms and conditions including pay rates, hours worked and the taking of leave.

ACU's leave provisions can be accessed to support your caring responsibilities, as set out in the [ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement](#) and [ACU Personal Leave Policy](#). More information about these leave provisions is covered in the 'leave offerings' section of this guide.

Supervisor tips:

- i. Be open to supporting team members who share their caring responsibilities. Ask considered and respectful questions, and actively listen to:
 - understand their circumstances
 - determine what kind of assistance they are requesting
 - foster collaboration to find a workable solution
 - respecting their privacy.

- ii. Keep in mind that it could be discriminatory to treat people differently and/or disadvantage them based on untested assumptions about their ability to perform work due to their caring responsibilities. For example, a selection panel's decision not to progress an application from a qualified candidate who discloses their caring responsibilities in their application or interview, could be considered direct discrimination. Assuming the candidate cannot meet the requirements of the role based on their status as a carer, means the principles of merit based selection have not been properly applied. This places you at risk of receiving a complaint about the recruitment and selection process.

Support for carers in the workplace

Undertaking your job along with carer’s responsibilities can feel overwhelming and isolating. We understand this and suggest a good starting point is to speak with your supervisor. Being supported is best achieved through open communication and collaboration with your supervisor. Be ready to provide a level of detail about your circumstances that you’re comfortable with to allow exploration of workable options moving forward.

Consider if there are any specific options you can explore with your supervisor that you think will work for you. If you’re not sure, that’s okay. This guide offers information about practical workplace options, information and external resources that you and your supervisor can consider together.

Working together and open exploration of all available options, ensures you are supported to balance work and caring responsibilities, while feeling valued and engaged in the workplace.

Pages 16 and 17 of this guide contain helpful communication aids and conversation points for staff and supervisors.

Leave offerings

Accessing relevant leave entitlements can assist with immediate and short-term* caring needs. Personal and compassionate leave provisions summarised in **Table 1** are outlined in the [ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement](#), [ACU Personal Leave Policy](#) and [ACU Compassionate Leave Policy](#). Eligibility for leave is based on responsibility as a primary carer, employment type and years of service. If you don’t work full time hours, a pro-rata calculation of your leave entitlement will apply.

Table 1: Summary of ACU leave entitlements accessible by carers

Employment type	Entitlement purpose	Paid leave entitlement	Conditions	Notice/evidence requirements
Personal leave:				
Continuing and fixed term staff	(a) To provide care or support to a member of the staff member’s immediate family, or a member of the staff member’s household, who requires care or support because of illness, or personal injury, or an unexpected emergency affecting the immediate family member of household; (b) Short term care of an elder.	Granted at twenty (20) working days per annum on commencement and for each completed year of paid service.	Fifteen (15) days of this leave will be cumulative based on leave utilised in the previous year.	Requirement to provide notice of taking leave as soon as practicable. Absence for more than three (3) consecutive working days requires evidence (e.g. medical certificate, statutory declaration).
Casual and sessional staff	When a staff member’s immediate family or household requires care or support for:	Up to two (2) days of unpaid personal leave for each occasion.		Requirement to provide notice of taking leave as soon as practicable, with such evidence satisfying the

	(a) personal illness or personal injury affecting the member; (b) an unexpected emergency affecting the member.			purpose of the leave (e.g. medical certificate or statutory declaration for themselves or family member requiring care).
Compassionate leave:				
Continuing and fixed term staff	(a) When a member of the staff's members immediate family or relative or member of the household contracts or develops personal illness or sustains a personal injury, that poses a serious threat to their life; (b) A member of the immediate family or household or relative dies.	Up to two (2) days paid compassionate leave on each occasion.		Requirement to provide notice of taking leave as soon as practicable, with such evidence satisfying the purpose of the leave (e.g. medical certificate or statutory declaration for themselves or family member requiring care).
Casual and sessional staff	(c) When a member of the staff's members immediate family or relative or member of the household contracts or develops personal illness or sustains a personal injury, that poses a serious threat to their life; (d) A member of the immediate family or household or relative dies.	Up to two (2) days unpaid compassionate leave on each occasion.		Requirement to provide notice of taking leave as soon as practicable, with such evidence satisfying the purpose of the leave (e.g. medical certificate or statutory declaration for themselves or family member requiring care).

(*) Short-term normally means up to five days ([ACU Personal Leave Policy](#)).

Exhausting personal leave entitlements to manage long-term or ongoing caring responsibilities is not recommended, as these leave accruals can disappear quickly. Further, you may need them to support your own health and wellbeing. Work with your supervisor to develop a mutually agreeable plan that best suits your longer-term caring needs. This could take the form of another type of leave (e.g. annual leave, long service leave, leave without pay, additional leave or extended leave), and/or a flexible work arrangement. Refer to **Table 2** on page 10 for more information.

Staff tips:

- i. For more information about leave, submit a [Service Central](#) general enquiry.
- ii. You can also self-serve and check your own leave balances in [Staff Connect](#). To calculate future leave balances, select 'Leave' and a future date. Click on the 'Predict' button to generate an approximate leave calculation for the desired date.

Flexible work arrangements and alternate workplace options

Flexible work arrangements (FWA) and alternate workplace options can assist to manage longer-term or ongoing caring responsibilities. Refer to the [ACU Flexible Working Arrangements Policy](#) and the table below to consider your options as a first step.

Table 2: Summary of ACU’s FWA and alternate workplace options accessible by carers

Workplace option	Information	Action required
Variation to work hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for more time in the working week for caring duties. Will result in a change to pay due to reduced working hours (e.g. full time to part time; part time reducing hours/days worked). Can be a temporary or permanent request to vary hours. Seek own independent financial and superannuation advice about any impacts to pay before changing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For temporary reductions – staff member to submit a ‘FWA’ in Staff Connect. For permanent reductions – supervisor to submit a ‘Request to Vary’ form in Staff Connect.
Adjust primary work location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option provides for a reduction in travel time to/from work. Requests may include working remotely (domestic only) or an alternate campus location that is closer to home. Remote working requests need to align with expectations that staff engage with campus life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff member to submit a ‘FWA’ in Staff Connect.
Work pattern change	<p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Compressed work hours over a weekly or fortnightly basis. Averaged working hours (for example, part time hours can be completed across more days). Change in workdays if working part time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides more time in the working week for caring duties. Seek independent financial and superannuation advice about any impacts to pay before making any changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For temporary work pattern changes – staff member to submit a ‘FWA’ in Staff Connect. For permanent work pattern changes – supervisor to submit a ‘Request to Vary’ form in Staff Connect.
Adjust start/finish times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start work later or finish work earlier. Provides for more capacity on weekday mornings/afternoons to attend appointments or other caring duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local arrangement between staff member and supervisor. Arrangement can be detailed via email.
Job share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the position/work duties with another available staff member, which will reduce the pressure to complete all work tasks. Consider what hours/days will be worked, with the remaining hours/days to be reallocated. This will result in a change to pay due to reduced working hours (e.g. full time to part time; part time reducing hours/days worked). Seek independent financial and superannuation advice about any impacts to pay before changing to a job share arrangement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor to raise a Service Central enquiry to discuss the process.

A successful FWA or alternate working arrangement is best achieved through partnership with your supervisor that starts with a conversation. The best approach includes open communication, regular check-ins, planning work duties, flexibility to alter the arrangement when/if circumstances change, and regular reviews of the work arrangement. If the FWA or alternate work arrangement is not working out as intended, discuss this as soon as possible to identify a workable solution.

FWA requests submitted in Staff Connect need to include the reason for the request and the duration being requested (e.g. six months, one year). Your supervisor will review the request and provide the decision in writing within 21 days of your submission. This will occur via a system generated email notification.

Further information about FWAs is available in the [Working Flexibly @ACU - Guide for Staff](#) and [ACU Flexible Working Arrangements Policy](#).

Staff tip: An approved FWA is not a permanent work arrangement and is in place for a temporary period of up to 12 months at a time. For longer-term or ongoing caring duties, renegotiate subsequent FWA applications and submit the request through [Staff Connect](#).

Supervisor tips:

- i. Be proactive if you're aware a team member has caring responsibilities and hasn't yet approached you for support. Reach out to start a discussion about options they might not be aware of, including referring them to this guide.
- ii. If you receive an FWA request where the team member hasn't had an initial conversation with you prior to its submission, then arrange a discussion at the earliest opportunity to consider:
 - how the request can be supported
 - any adjustments or considerations they may not have considered that you could offer
 - any wellbeing support you can suggest to support them as a carer.
- iii. If unsure about the request or you need advice, contact People and Capability **before** finalising an FWA decision, as there are legislative obligations you need to have considered.
- iv. Schedule regular catch ups with the team member to check how they're doing, and how the arrangement is working. Adjustments may be needed or consideration of other options to suit changing carer needs.
- v. You will need to consider and manage any broader team issues that may arise. This can include equitable workload distribution, effective team leave planning and access to leave so that all team members feel their wellbeing is being considered and that they have the right to switch off from work.
- vi. If you have concerns that the FWA or alternate workplace arrangement is not working effectively, organise a discussion with the team member as soon as possible. It is recommended you seeking advice from People and Capability before the discussion.

Children on campus

If you are the carer of a child, there may be occasions when you need to bring your child onto campus to provide care for them (e.g. when childcare plans fall through, or you work part time and are attending a campus event on a non-workday). For more information including gaining prior approval to bring a child on campus, refer to the [Children of Staff and Students on University Premises Procedure](#).

Staff tip: If your school aged child has a pupil-free day coming up and they aren't required to attend school, you can use up to four days (per year) of your personal leave to look after them. For more information refer to [ACU Personal Leave Policy](#).

This leave is not a substitute for childcare or dependent care arrangements during normal school term holidays and if leave is required for normal school terms breaks, recreation leave and long service leave will apply.

Looking after yourself

Being a carer can be physically and emotionally demanding, which means it's important to prioritise your own self-care. Some signs to look out for include fatigue, disrupted or difficult sleep patterns, anxiety, reduced concentration, changed eating habits or reduced appetite, headaches and other physical ailments, low energy levels or a lack of engagement at work, and/or withdrawing from family or social gatherings.

It's important to recognise these signs early and seek the care and support you need. Prioritising self-care is not only vital for your health but enables you to be there for those who rely on you. Below are some resources to assist you in looking after yourself while balancing your carer responsibilities.

Wellbeing and emotional support:

- ACU's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to you and your immediate family members to access at **no cost** to staff. [Acacia EAP](#) provides a 24-hour confidential counselling service of up to three sessions per calendar year (with additional sessions being made available at the request of the EAP counsellor), plus online wellbeing resources. Contact **Acacia EAP** on **1300 364 273**
- Your GP or registered healthcare professional
- Your local [ACU Campus Ministry team](#)
- Health Direct through '[Caring for others](#)', '[Caring for a sick child](#)', '[Carer support \(respite care\)](#)', '[Caring for someone with a mental illness](#)', '[Caring for someone with cancer](#)', '[Caring for someone with dementia or Alzheimer's disease](#)'
- CatholicCare/CentreCare: [Brisbane Archdiocese](#) | [Canberra Archdiocese](#) | [Melbourne Archdiocese](#) | [Sydney Archdiocese](#) | [Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains Diocese](#) | [Ballarat Diocese](#)
- [Stride](#)
- [Australian Multicultural Community Services](#)
- [13YARN](#): Free confidential and crisis support by First Nations peoples
- [BeyondBlue](#) | [Lifeline](#) | [MensLine Australia](#)
- [Open Arms – Veteran Family and Counselling](#)

- [Hammond Care](#): blogs, guides, podcasts, videos and eBooks that you can view to increase your own education and personal knowledge so you can better understand and support your family or household member
- ACU staff workplace groups (eg. [Neurodiversity@ACU](#), [ACU Working Parents](#))
- Family and friends from your personal network

Other support options:

- [ACU medical centres](#): offering high-quality healthcare services to staff, students and the local community
- [ACU Sport facilities and gyms](#): sporting and gym facilities you can access or sign up to as part of your personal health routine
- [ACU Campus Ministry](#): embracing peoples of all faiths and traditions
- [Gather My Crew](#): coordinate support for a carer or member of the family household

Remember that you are not alone and help is available. A detailed listing of external resources and providers is available on page 18 of this guide.

Supervisor tips:

- i. It's important to recognise that this could be a difficult time for your team member. Your visible support, even a small gesture, can make a significant difference to their wellbeing and employee experience. Arrange regular catchups to check how they're managing work and caring responsibilities, and how they're coping personally.
- ii. Signs that your team member might not be coping include:
 - exhibiting fatigue, burnout or overload
 - difficulty concentrating or performing work tasks
 - making mistakes at work where previously this didn't occur
 - being late to work on a frequent basis
 - reduced or little engagement with team colleagues/ the workplace
 - changes in behaviour and energy levels (eg. irritability, anxiety, withdrawing, being angry, combative, sad or emotional)
 - not attending to personal hygiene and grooming.
- iii. Remember that you don't need to have all the answers yourself and you can refer your team member to the useful resources in this guide, seek assistance and/or advice from People and Capability. Specialised [manager support](#) is available to you through Acacia EAP. Visit [Leaders - Acacia EAP](#) or call Manager Support on 1300 364 273.

Government services and financial assistance

The Commonwealth Government offers carers financial assistance and payment services. Start your search with [Services Australia](#) and find the topic that is relevant to you and your circumstances.

Other services to consider include:

- [Government support for carers](#)
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme ([NDIS](#)): an Australian Government initiative that funds costs associated with disability
- [Caring for someone \(payment\)](#) – Services Australia: check eligibility for carer payment, carer allowance, carer supplement, health care cards and more
- [Carer payments](#) – Department of Social Services: check eligibility for child disability assistance payment, carer adjustment payment and other payments such as rent assistance and pharmaceutical allowance
- [Young Carer Bursary Program](#): packages for eligible carers aged 25 and under.

Staff tip: Log into your MyGov account in [Services Australia](#) for more information about applicable payments and services for you and your family member.

Conversation starter tips – staff member

Having a conversation about personal issues can be challenging. Use the following tips to plan and prepare for the conversation with your supervisor about how you can work together to balance your work and caring responsibilities.

Plan and prepare for the conversation:

Think about the level of detail you feel comfortable sharing with your supervisor that explains enough of your circumstances to identify suitable workplace supports. Specify if the caring duties are short-term, long-term or ongoing; and the time or space you need during the working week to dedicate to caring.

Have you read through this Carer's Guide so you are familiar with available information and options? Consider one or more options and be prepared to discuss these with your supervisor so that an appropriate plan can be put into place.

Be prepared to review your leave entitlements and leave balances. This will inform the options you and your supervisor might consider.

Schedule a time to speak with your supervisor to work on a mutually agreeable plan that includes being open to suggestions and options.

Inform yourself about the ACU wellbeing support available to you and your family.

After the conversation:

Lodge any forms or requests for approval after you've had the conversation with your supervisor to ensure these are actioned before the arrangement begins.

Submit any leave applications through Staff Connect for approval before the leave date.

Set up dates/times to stay connected with your supervisor on how everything is going. Be open to subsequent conversations, adapting to changes as they arise (both personally and in the workplace), and discussing any additional support needs including workload management and/or assignment of work duties.

Keep your supervisor updated on any changes to your circumstances and renegotiate a new plan (if applicable).

Know what external wellbeing support and government/financial assistance is available.

Remember to look after your own health and wellbeing, and to use the self-care options contained in this guide.

Conversation starter tips – supervisor

Use the following tips to plan and prepare for the conversation when a team member shares they have caring responsibilities and looking to discuss support options available. If you're aware a team member has caring responsibilities but they've not approached you yet, consider reaching out to initiate a conversation using these same tips.

Plan and prepare for the conversation:

Have you	read through this Carer's Guide so you are familiar with what information and options you could offer? Think laterally and consider the present team structure and workload distribution to prepare for the conversation.
Schedule	a time to meet to discuss the team members' circumstances. Consider privacy when arranging the meeting (e.g. when and where you hold this conversation, will it be in person, online, off-campus or going for a coffee?).
Be in the moment	and remember personal information is being shared with you and it might be challenging for the team member. Instil trust by using active listening and open questions to facilitate communication. Open questions could include: <i>"What is happening for you?" "How is this situation affecting you?" "What support would assist you to manage your work and caring responsibilities?" "How can I assist you?"</i>
Be open	to working with the team member on a mutually agreeable plan. This includes being flexible to options/support being requested, while also considering the needs of the team and the university. Are there any alternate options you can offer? Clarify next steps.
Know	what internal wellbeing support you can refer them to (e.g. EAP, People and Capability).

After the conversation:

Respond to	any forms, leave applications, request for flexible work arrangement or other submitted information in a timely manner. If you are intending to decline a FWA request, it is recommended that you obtain advice from People and Capability prior to a conversation with the team member. Offer alternative options where possible.
Schedule	regular dates/times to catch up with the team member to discuss how everything is tracking and/or discuss any additional support they may need (e.g. workload management, assignment of work duties, etc).
Be open	to the team member's circumstances changing or needing to make adjustments to the original plan (e.g. short-term caring is now needed on a longer-term basis, change in personal health of the family member may require more or less care, etc).
Obtain	advice or clarification (if needed) from People and Capability before finalising a plan. This is particularly important if a workable solution has not been reached.
Seek support	from your immediate supervisor, contact EAP Manager Support or People and Capability for more complex requests or conversations.
Remember	to maintain privacy and not share information disclosed to you without the consent of your team member. If you have concerns about wellbeing and safety, seek immediate advice from People and Capability.

External resources

A list of external organisations, resources and support services:

- [Carer Gateway](#): an Australian Government program. Free services (peer groups, tailored support packages, counselling, coaching, access to emergency respite)
- [Carer Associations](#): each state and territory have carer organisations
- Australian Human Rights Commission: [Supporting carers in the workplace toolkit](#)
- [Centrelink office locations](#)
- [Department of Health and Aged Care](#): the national peak body for unpaid carers
- Disability and carers, [Department of Social Services](#): Support for carers including programs, services and payments
- Australian Government Attorney-General's Department: [Protecting the rights of older Australian](#)
- [Mental health Carers Australia](#): a national organisation dedicated to supporting carers of people with mental health issues
- [Mind Australia](#): offers mental health services and support for carers including respite, counseling, and educational programs
- [Wellways Australia](#): offers a range of services for carers of people with mental health issues, disabilities, or those experiencing other challenges, including respite services and peer support programs
- [Health Direct](#): free Australian health advice
- [Like Family](#): find a carer or support worker to help with caring duties
- [Carers Australia](#)
- [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Carers](#)
- [Wyanga](#): a not-for-profit First Nations organisation providing tailored and culturally appropriate aged care services
- [Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Carers](#)
- [Carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds](#)
- [LGBTIQ+ Carer](#)
- [Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia](#): the peak national body representing Australians from culturally and linguistic diverse backgrounds
- [Dementia Australia](#): offers support, information, and resources for carers of people with dementia, including educational programs and access to local support groups
- [Stride](#): carer and family mental health support services
- [Sane](#): self-care tips for carers
- [Young Carers Network](#): an initiative funded by the Australian Government
- [Australian Multicultural Community Services](#): carer and family support services
- [Association for Children with a Disability](#): information, workshops, advocacy and support
- [Gather My Crew](#): coordinate support for a carer through a mobile application
- [Care About](#): aged care information and resources
- [Open Hands Community Care](#): Christian based charity serving Brisbane communities with support services such as low-cost essential groceries and household items
- [Cancer Council](#): caring for someone with cancer information, resources and [booklet](#)
- [Australian Carers Guide](#)
- [Redkite](#): offers support to families and carers of children and young people with cancer, providing financial assistance, emotional support, and educational resources
- [Moneysmart](#): free tools, tips and guidance in managing finances

Appendix – Examples of caring scenarios with suggested workplace options

1. Single parent caring for a child living with a disability

Adrian is a single dad who cares for his son with autism. There are days where Adrian struggles to get to work on time as his son refuses to get dressed in the morning. On these occasions school drop offs take longer and Adrian is late to work. What adjustment/s could Adrian consider requesting to better balance school drop offs and getting to work on time easier (and less stressful) to manage?

Adrian could speak with his supervisor about adjusting work start and finish times (flexible working hours) to accommodate his sons' morning routine. Before the chat, Adrian could check if there are any core office working hours (set start/finish times) in place, and to consider how long (weeks, months) and often (daily, once a week) the request will be for. Where agreement is reached, Adrian and the supervisor will detail the local arrangement in an email, schedule times for local 'check in chats', and set a future date to review the overall arrangement to ensure it continues to work for both of them.

2. Caring for an elderly parent

Tammy has an elderly parent who is frail and no longer able to drive independently. Every three months, Tammy's parent needs to attend a specialist appointment in a location that isn't close to public transport. Tammy will need to drive their parent to and from the specialist's office at least four times this year. Tammy also anticipates they will need help with their grocery shopping and other household management tasks during the working week. Tammy is considering accessing ACU's leave provisions to help manage these caregiving responsibilities while maintaining work commitments.

Tammy needs a total of four single days' of carers leave to drive her parent to the specialist appointments. Tammy has reviewed the personal leave policy and her personal leave balances, and discusses the leave with the supervisor before submitting four separate personal leave requests in Staff Connect. Since each leave request is for fewer than three consecutive working days, Tammy is not required to submit a copy of her parent's medical documentation.

For Tammy to effectively manage work, alongside grocery shopping and household management, Tammy discussed a flexible work arrangement request to work from home one day a week. On this day Tammy will finish work on time before undertaking the grocery shopping and household management tasks for her parent. Tammy has also worked with her supervisor on a plan for ensuring work tasks are completed effectively at home and to have regular 'check in chats'.

3. Caring for a partner with a medical condition

Sharma's partner has been diagnosed with an auto-immune disease, a chronic medical condition that needs to be managed on an ongoing basis. During flare-ups, Sharma's partner may need to attend more frequent medical appointments, require assistance with daily tasks, and help with rest and recovery. Sharma is worried about how these caring responsibilities will impact work and does not know what options are available.

Sharma decides to submit a Service Central general enquiry for advice. People and Capability respond to provide Sharma with their leave balances, advice on leave policies, and a link to the Working Flexibly @ACU Guide for Staff. Sharma is encouraged to speak with their supervisor about options at work which can include a variation to working hours or days worked, altering work start or finish times, applying for leave days when taking their partner to medical appointments, and an application to work remotely so Sharma can work closer to home up to two days per week to manage caregiving. People and Capability have also provided Sharma with the university's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) contact details so they can access three free counselling sessions as well as online resources that will help with coping strategies to support their partner's ongoing health condition.

4. Caring for a family member who is neurodivergent

Xi's teenage child has recently been diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and has found during mid-year and yearly school examinations they experience severe anxiety. Xi wants to be more available to support their child in July and November, the peak examination times scheduled at the school. Xi doesn't know whether the workplace offers support and when speaking with a team colleague, they suggest Xi speak with their supervisor.

Xi approaches the supervisor to ask if they can meet to discuss a personal situation. Xi explains their child has severe anxiety, this peaks at times of school exam periods, and they are best placed to support their child to cope at these times. Xi's supervisor suggests Xi apply for annual or long service leave for the upcoming dates needed in July and November, and they will check that no other team member has applied for the same leave dates so workload can be effectively managed. Xi's supervisor mentions the university's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to Xi and explains how useful it could be for their family to have independent external support during these times. Before the conversation ends, the supervisor asks if there is anything else they can help Xi with and they will check in with Xi in a month's time to see how everything is going.

References

Resources acknowledged in the research for the preparation of this guide:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, [2022 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers \(SDAC\)](#)
- [Carer Recognition Act 2010 \(Commonwealth\)](#)
- [Fair Work Act 2009 \(Commonwealth\)](#)
- [Fair Work Ombudsman](#)
- [Fair Work Act National Employment Standards \(NES\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Commonwealth\)](#)
- [Services Australia](#)
- [Department of Health and Aged Care](#)
- [Department of Social Services](#)
- [Carers Australia](#)
- [Carers NSW | Carer Gateway](#)
- [Australian Carers Guide](#)

