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caregIVR

SGH

A breathing space for the caregiver

Who cares for the caregiver?
On rest and mental health

CaregIVR virtual greenhouse – a place to rest among greenery and animals.

Caring for a loved one after a stroke often means working without a break or anyone to take over. Chronic stress increases the caregiver's own risk of depression, sleep disorders and cardiovascular disease. Looking after yourself is not selfish: it is essential to providing good care.

SMALL STEPS EVERY DAY

- 15 minutes every day just for yourself: a walk, music, a chat or time in the garden.
- Contact with nature (plants, greenery and animals) helps you calm down.
- 4–6 breathing: inhale through your nose for 4 seconds, then exhale slowly for 6 seconds; repeat 5–10 times.
- Be active for about 30 minutes on most days of the week. This can be split into shorter sessions.
- Keep up with your own check-ups: blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar.
- Ask for help: write down tasks that family, neighbours or volunteers could take over.

If you recognise several signs of overload in yourself, talk to your family doctor.

SIGNS OF OVERLOAD

- fatigue that does not go away after rest
- irritability, tearfulness, a sense of helplessness
- difficulty falling asleep or frequent waking
- withdrawing from friends and giving up hobbies
- putting off your own medical appointments
- feeling guilty when you do something for yourself

WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT

- Respite care: temporary care for a person with a certified severe disability (or equivalent). Ask at OPS/MOPS or PCPR.
- Support groups for caregivers and stroke survivor organisations.
- A psychiatrist and mental health centre (no referral needed).
- Helpline for adults in crisis: 116 123.

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