

Breathlessness Intervention Service

Information for Carers

It is very clear that caring for someone who has severe breathlessness is very tiring, both emotionally and physically for relatives and other close family and friends.

It may also be something that you very much want to do and take pride in doing because you recognise that no-one else can be as close to that person and such a great comfort as you can be. However, it is very important that you are able to pace yourself and get any extra help that is available to enable you to continue doing what you want to do and also continue to have a life of your own. Looking after your health and having some of your own interests and pleasures is not selfish; it is very important. Not only do you need to be healthy to continue to be able to look after your loved one and other people in your family, but also to retain a sense of who you are and what you need to give you a healthy perspective on life.

In the Breathlessness Intervention Service (BIS) we feel it is very important to support carers. However we recognise that we often don't see those caring for the patient, "carers", because they are out working or have other things they need to do when we visit. In this leaflet we describe some of the ways in which you may be able to get help for yourself and urge you, if you wish, to have at least a telephone conversation with a member of the BIS team, whilst we are seeing your relative or friend. Here are some ideas:

The Hospice – If your relative or friend is attending the hospice, take the opportunity whilst they are at the Day Therapy Centre or Breathlessness Clinic to go out for the day, or meet friends or simply to have a complete rest. Make sure you use that time for yourself and your own interests and needs rather than rushing around trying to do 101 other things so that you also get some benefit from it.

Services for Carers - If your friend or relative is involved with the hospice or being visited by a Community Palliative Care Service, e.g. a Macmillan nurse or a doctor from the hospice, ask them about services that are provided at your local hospice for carers.

Your local GP and District Nurse – Often when your GP or District Nurse is visiting someone with breathlessness the carer does not ask for help with the things that they need. The GP and the District Nurse either in the home or at the Practice can be a great support to individual carers and help them to look after their own health. It is very important, for example, if you have a chronic condition of your own or if you develop new symptoms that you quickly go to see the doctor or a Practice nurse to get the help you need.

Crossroads or Other Carer Support Charities – Your Library, your District Nurse, your Hospice, will all be able to point you in the direction of charities or local organisations which exist to give carers a break when they are looking after someone who is ill. These are either no cost or low cost services. Look out for their numbers for the service in your area.

Citizens Advice Bureau – The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) will help you to get any grants or other money or benefits that you are entitled to because the government and society recognises that caring for someone is a tiring but a highly important role. Any money that they give to somebody who needs caring for can be used to address your own needs too.

Finally

We would very much like to meet you or at least talk to you during the time that we are seeing your relative or friend to help with their breathlessness. Do let us know if there is a good time and if it is really difficult, at least we could arrange to speak on the telephone. We look forward to hearing from you.

Our contact details are:

Dr. Sara Booth / Megan Forsdyke / Maureen Frostick / Pauline Kleanthous –
Tel: 01223 586703

Other Useful Contacts:

Crossroads, Cambridge: 01223 415600

Help the Aged, Cambridge: 01223 365437

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Informacje te można otrzymać w innych językach, w wersji dużym drukiem lub audio. Zamówienia prosimy składać pod numerem: 01223 216032 lub wysyłając e-mail: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Polish

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Portuguese

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Russian

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或發郵件到: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Cantonese

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Bengali



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