



BALANCING CARING AND A CAREER

Top 10 life skills developed by carers which help professional life - includes a real life case study.



Top 10 life skills developed by carers which help professional life

#1

Resilience - coping with multiple challenges on a daily basis.

#2

Problem-solving - regular fire-fighting means problems are tackled head on.

#3

Conflict-resolution - people who are ill can be hard to deal with.

#4

Patience - learning the art of self-control in the face of adversity.

#5

Empathy - understanding and anticipating the complex needs of others.

#6

Time management - managing complex and ever-changing daily schedules.

#7

Communication - between professional carers, doctors, social services, mental health professionals, family members.

#8

Leadership - carers make fantastic leaders due to their people skills and their inspiration to others as role models.

#9

Relationship management - developing trusting and sustainable relationships with carers, medical professionals and family members.

#10

Work/life balance - prioritising work tasks to ensure all the most important things get done so that the daily schedule allows for caring responsibilities and self-care.



Case study: a day in the life of a working carer

Sharing real-life stories from working carers is one of the best ways for organisations to begin to support those employees with additional caring responsibilities at home.

Encouraging connection with others who are struggling with similar challenges can help relieve the isolation and often despair that comes hand in hand with caring for an ill, elderly, disabled or neurodiverse relative or friend. It can also provide a forum for positivity, hope as well as practical tips.

Pete is a full-time insurance professional who works from home in order to provide care and company for his mum, who is 80 years old and has advanced dementia. She lives in Pete's house and has 3 daily care visits.

6am. Wake up, check the news headlines, check mum's bedroom camera to see if she is awake and OK. Once again she is awake early and looks like she's shifted herself into an uncomfortable position during the night. Go in to make her comfortable, make us both tea, then start logging on to check the news and emails. Put on a load of mum's washing.

8.30am. Carers arrive to wash and dress mum. She's very distressed this morning and I can hear her shouting at the carers. So upsetting to hear as this is not who she is. Find it hard to concentrate on work so eventually go in to see if I can help calm her.

10am. Drive over to the pharmacy to pick up mum's meds; unfortunately they weren't all ready so will have to go back again tomorrow. Stopped off at the shops to pick up mum's favourite cake – this is all we can seem to get her to eat at the moment.

12 noon. Carers come in for their midday visit. Chat to them for a while to give them an update on the meds. They report they are concerned that mum appears to have developed a rash which needs some cream. Phone the doctors but the nurse practitioner was busy so they asked me to call back again tomorrow.

2.30pm. Spend about an hour in between work meetings catching up with carers admin. Forms need to be filled out and submitted.



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4.30pm. Call from manager. Concerned that I had to cancel the 4pm meeting at short notice. I explained about mum not being well. He didn't say anything but I felt his annoyance. Apologised and promised to reschedule for tomorrow.

6.00-8pm. Caught up with work but felt exhausted. Popped in to give mum a drink, tried talking to her but she was distant and unresponsive. Feels lonely and I miss who she used to be. She's getting worse and the future feels bleak.

9pm. Carers arrive to wash and change mum and put her to bed. She refuses to get into bed so I go in to help.

10pm. Clear away mum's drinks, finish her washing, empty her bins, get myself something to eat, logoff and shut down. Feel drained and down.

Keep informed

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One significant upcoming change is the implementation of the Carer's Leave Act 2023, expected in April 2024. This Act grants employees with caregiving responsibilities the legal entitlement to take up to five days off each year to fulfil their duties towards individuals who are elderly, have disabilities, or are suffering from illnesses or injuries lasting over three months. It's worth noting that these days will be unpaid and can be taken either as full days or half days.

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