Carers

Your 6 Ways to Wellbeing

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Caring for someone else can be deeply rewarding, but it also comes with emotional, physical, and financial pressures. Taking time to care for yourself – even in small ways – is vital to maintaining your own wellbeing.

Inspired by the West Lothian 6 Ways to Wellbeing, this guide is tailored for carers. Whether you care for a family member, friend, or neighbour, these small steps can help you feel more balanced, connected, and supported.

You can explore the Six Ways in any order - there's no right or wrong place to start. Take your time, and choose the areas that feel most relevant to you right now. Here, we've included some simple ideas and suggestions to help you build the Six Ways into your everyday life.

Read on to find out more and try them out for yourself.

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Your Wellbeing Traffic Lights

For each of the 6 Ways to Wellbeing, think about how you feel right now. Then choose a colour below:

Red		**This is an area I find difficult or I'm not doing much of at the moment.**
Amber		**I'm doing some things in this area, but there's room for improvement.**
Green		**I feel confident and positive in this area.**

Focus first on Red or Amber areas. Small steps-like checking in with a friend or taking a short walk-can grow into something meaningful over time.

There's no right or wrong answer. This is just a tool to help you reflect and take positive steps for your wellbeing.

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Your Wellbeing Traffic Lights

Feeling in control of money reduces stress. This could mean making a budget, getting advice, or taking small steps to plan ahead.

Paying attention to what's around us helps us feel present. You might notice nature, savour a meal, or pause to breathe.

Building strong relationships helps us feel supported. This could mean spending time with family, friends, or joining a group.

Learning new things keeps our minds active and builds confidence. Try a new hobby, recipe, or skill.

Moving our bodies boosts mood and energy. It doesn't have to be sport - it could be walking, dancing, or stretching.

Helping others gives us purpose and joy. You could volunteer, offer your time, or do something kind for a neighbour.

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Financial wellbeing

You deserve support and peace of mind with money too.

Money worries can weigh heavily on carers. You might be juggling reduced work hours, additional costs, or navigating complex benefit systems. It's understandable to feel anxious or uncertain about finances, and you're not alone in that.

Taking small, practical steps can make things feel more manageable and help you regain a sense of control. Financial wellbeing isn't about having everything figured out; it's about knowing support is available and that you deserve to access it.

Financial Wellbeing

- Check if you're receiving all the benefits and entitlements you're due (like Carer's Allowance or support grants).
- Set aside 10 minutes to review your weekly spending – small changes can ease stress.
- Plan for unexpected costs. Even setting aside a small amount weekly can create a buffer for emergencies, equipment, or medical supplies.
- Talk to a carer support service or Citizens Advice – they can help with budgeting, benefits, and local support.
- Celebrate small financial wins, like preparing a homemade meal or claiming a discount.

Financial wellbeing worksheet

Reminder

You don’t have to manage everything alone. Reaching out for financial advice or support is a strength, not a failure. You deserve security and peace of mind.

Use this space to think about ways to feel more in control of your money and reduce stress.

- How do I feel about my finances today?
- What’s one step I could take to feel more in control?

Take notice

Pause for a moment and check in with how you're really feeling.

When you spend so much time focusing on another person's wellbeing, it can be hard to find time to check in with your own. Yet pausing to notice how you feel and what's around you can create small, powerful moments of calm. Taking notice helps you slow down, breathe, and reconnect with yourself in the middle of a busy day. You deserve to have moments that are just for you, however brief they may be.

Take Notice

- Pause for a few deep breaths before starting your day.
- Notice the sights, sounds, and smells around you – a bird outside the window, a favourite song, a fresh cup of tea.
- Keep a notebook to jot down a moment of peace or something that made you smile.
- Try a short mindfulness practice – even five minutes can help.
- Observe your own needs. Pay attention to signs of fatigue, tension, or stress. Taking a small break when needed is an important act of self-care.
- Use West Space for wellbeing resources. Their "Self-help" and "Carers & Family Support" sections list local courses, support groups, and practical tips to manage stress.

Take notice worksheet

Reminder

Moments of calm matter. Noticing something simple and good reminds you that you matter too.

Use this space to explore ways to be more mindful and aware of the present moment.

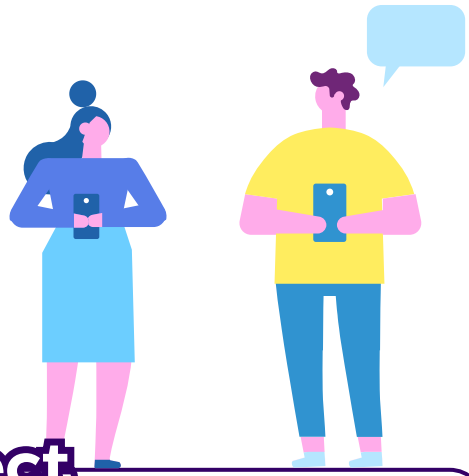
- What's something nice I noticed today?
- What helped me feel a bit calmer?

Connect

Even just five minutes chatting with someone who gets it makes such a difference.

Caring for someone can change your world. Your days may revolve around appointments, routines, and someone else's needs, leaving little time for your own connections. It's easy to feel cut off or like no one else truly understands what you're going through.

But connection, even small and simple moments of it, can be a lifeline. Reaching out helps ease loneliness, offers emotional support, and reminds you that you are part of a wider community that values and understands you.



Ways to Connect

- Talk to someone who understands – connect with other carers through local groups or online communities.
- Reach out to a friend, even with a quick text or voice note.
- Make space for small conversations – with a neighbour, shop assistant, or someone at a support group.
- Ask for support – sometimes, just talking to someone about how things are going can lift a weight.
- Talk to professionals. Health visitors, support workers, or local council carers' services in West Lothian can provide guidance, emotional support, and referrals.
- Share experiences. Listening and offering advice to other carers can strengthen connections and remind you that support is mutual.

Connect worksheet

Reminder

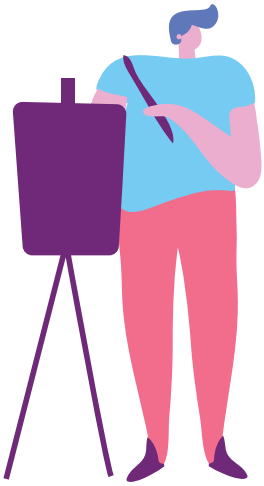
Connection doesn’t have to be big to be meaningful. Even a small chat can remind you that you’re not in this alone.

Use the space below to explore ways you can connect with others. Think about what works for you and add your own ideas.

- Who do I feel safe opening up to?
- How can I connect with another carer this week?

Keep learning

Try something new or rediscover something that's just for you.



Being a carer often means learning out of necessity, such as new skills, routines, or ways to manage care. But learning can also be a way to nurture your own growth and curiosity.

Exploring something new or returning to an old interest helps you reconnect with your sense of self outside of caring. It can boost confidence, spark joy, and remind you that your mind and passions still matter. Learning, in any form, is a way to invest in you.

Keep Learning

- Take five minutes to read an article, watch a video, or listen to a podcast on something that interests you.
- Join local carer workshops. West Lothian Carers Centre and community hubs offer free sessions on wellbeing, skills, or practical caring advice. Check West Space for information.
- Try creative activities. Writing, crafting, baking, or small DIY projects can boost wellbeing and provide a sense of achievement.
- Reflect on your skills. Caring develops resilience, time management, empathy, and problem-solving - acknowledging these helps you see your own growth.
- Experiment with routines. Try small changes to daily schedules to find what makes caring tasks easier and less stressful.

Keep learning worksheet

Reminder

You're still growing, learning, and adapting every day. Making space for your own interests helps you remember who you are beyond caring.

Use this space to think about ways to try new things and keep your mind active.

- What would I like to learn or try, just for myself?
- What's one small thing I've enjoyed learning recently?

Be active

A few gentle movements can help you release tension and reset.

Caring can be physically and emotionally demanding. It's easy to forget your own body in the process. But gentle movement, however small, can make a big difference to your mood, energy, and stress levels. Being active doesn't mean doing intense exercise; it means moving in ways that feel supportive and kind to your body.

Whether that's stretching, walking, dancing, or simply breathing deeply, giving your body attention helps you feel more grounded and resilient.

Be Active

- Stretch for a few minutes in the morning or before bed.
- Go for a short walk if you can – even just around the block.
- Put on music and dance or move however feels good.
- Look for videos online – many are designed for carers or busy adults. Many are free and can be done at home.
- Incorporate movement into caring tasks. Light stretches while moving, squats while tidying, or gentle lifts while helping the person you care for keep you active without extra time needed.
- Join local classes if possible. West Lothian community centres, libraries, and carer groups sometimes offer gentle exercise and yoga.

Be active worksheet

Reminder

Movement isn't about doing more; it's about caring for your body. Small, gentle movements count.

Use this space to think about ways you can move more and stay active.

- What movement feels doable and enjoyable?
- When can I take a moment to stretch or walk?

Give

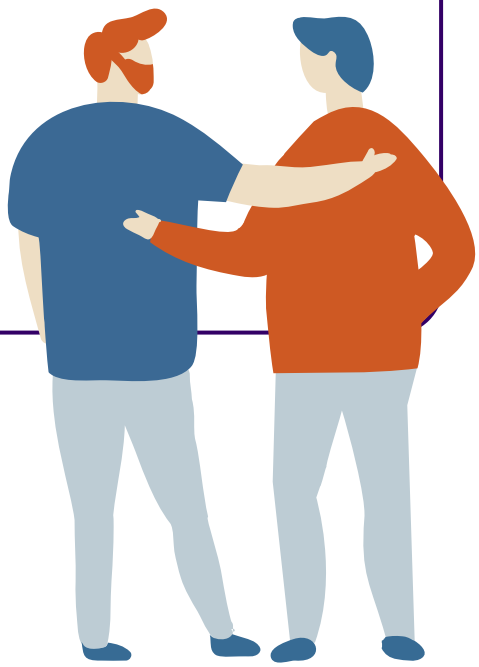
You give so much already - remember to include yourself in that care.

You give so much every day through your time, energy, patience, and love. It can be easy to focus on what still needs doing and forget the incredible value of what you already give. Giving doesn't just mean doing more; it also means giving to yourself.

Offering kindness, compassion, and rest to yourself is part of the same care you show others. When you give yourself permission to receive care too, you sustain your ability to keep giving in healthy, balanced ways.

Give

- Acknowledge your impact. Remind yourself that your care matters, every small action makes a difference.
- Talking about your experiences with other carers or in local groups can provide support and insight for someone else in a similar situation.
- Offer small gestures to fellow carers. A kind word, a brief message, or sharing a helpful tip strengthens the community of carers in West Lothian.
- Give to yourself. Rest, compassion, and self-care are acts of giving that sustain your ability to care for others.



Give worksheet

Reminder

You give so much every day. Remember to give to yourself too - kindness, rest, and credit for all you do.

Use this space to explore ways you can help or support others.

- What would I like to learn or try, just for myself?
- What's one small thing I've enjoyed learning recently?

The 6 Ways to Wellbeing

Final Thoughts

As a carer, it's easy to put your own needs last. But looking after your wellbeing helps you keep going – and you *deserve* support, care, and rest too.
You don't need to do it all. Even one small step can make a big difference.
Share this guide with another carer – we're stronger when we support each other.

And don't keep it to yourself! Share this guide with friends, family, or neighbours. We all face challenges, and sometimes just knowing someone else is trying too can be incredibly reassuring. When we support each other, we build stronger, more compassionate communities - and that's good for everyone's wellbeing.

For local resources, support groups, and more tips for carers, visit:

Your thoughts...

This space is yours. Use it to jot down ideas, reflections, or anything that comes to mind as you explore the Six Ways to Wellbeing.

There's no right or wrong way to do it. It's simply a space to pause, reflect, and capture whatever feels helpful in the moment.

Your thoughts...

Stay in touch

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