

## Carers' Self Advocacy Toolkit

# How do you see your own needs?



# How you see your own needs

For most of us, carers or not, it is easier to ask for things for someone else than it is for ourselves. Using this principle, let's say you have a friend who has told you they're exhausted and in need of a break from their caring responsibilities. They haven't had respite for a long time and recently they have been up in the night a lot to care for the person who is unwell. They are at the end of their tether and they have already mentioned it to their social worker.

This exercise has been adapted from an exercise from 'A Self-Advocacy Guide for Carers' from Vocal Carers Advocacy Service 1999.

What do you think about your friend's situation?

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What are your feelings about your friend's situation?

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What would you advise your friend to do?

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How would you feel about putting your friend's views across to a professional?

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Now, imagine yourself in the same situation. You are exhausted and need a break but, unlike your friend, you don't have anyone to talk it through with.

What do you think about your situation? *Think about how you feel yourself. What is your inner critic saying (the voice that says you shouldn't need help, ought to be able to cope...)*

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How are you feeling about your situation?

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How would you feel about talking to a professional (GP, social worker) about your situation?

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Look back over your responses for your friend and for yourself. What differences are there in how you would support a friend and how you tend to deal with your own difficulties?

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What learning is there about how you respond to your own needs?

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### References

Vocal Carers Advocacy Service

Vocalise: A self-advocacy guide for carers 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Edinburgh, Vocal 1999, p18-23