

## Support for Carers - Creative Art Therapy

The caring role can be very rewarding, however there are many moments when you may feel isolated and alone. Unhelpful feelings and experiences may occupy many of your thoughts.

Carers often forget their own needs and may have increased feelings of anger, resentment, sadness, frustration, guilt, confusion, helplessness and uncertainty about the future.

Stress, sleep disturbance, exhaustion, poor eating habits, loss of interest in daily events and low motivation to try new interests might be the new normal.

When the person we are caring for is our partner we may find that communication, understanding, intimacy, sharing and supporting each other also becomes different and for some people this creates additional complications along with experiences of loss and grief.

Relationships with family and friends may also be changing. Friends might not contact you as often and if you are invited out you might not want to attend, instead choosing to withdraw from social connections. This reduces your supportive community and increases your isolation.

Your health may deteriorate, having more headaches, digestive issues, chronic pain and other physical symptoms.

If you have been experiencing some or many of the above symptoms and not caring for yourself it may leave you more vulnerable to depression and anxiety and other physical health conditions. Studies have shown that when demands constantly exceed a person's resources, health and wellbeing is reduced and the risk of depression increases.

These changes may slowly accumulate over many years and for some they may have happened suddenly. Either way if you are experiencing difficulties in your carer role, you may benefit from professional supports to assist in improving your relationship, your health and wellbeing and your quality of life.

Art Therapy has been accessed by many carers over recent years to help with:

- expressing all your needs creatively and having meaningful discussions
- gaining support, increasing understanding and learning new helpful skills
- making beneficial and lasting changes to improve personal health and wellbeing
- identifying personal resources, improving resilience and remembering how to relax and have fun



Group or individual sessions are available and include meaningful therapeutic conversations and creative art expressions

*"I took my clay piece home and showed my partner (with PTSD), it opened up conversations, we both realised that our thoughts and feelings were similar, this led to us better understanding each other, greater empathy and improved our communications. It was a step in the right direction and really helped"*

To find out more please contact:

Sandra Hatton:

[Sandra.Hatton@austin.org.au](mailto:Sandra.Hatton@austin.org.au)

Art Therapy Studio:

9490 7599 (leave a message)

***This is a Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre Art Therapy Service program, 1 Yarra Bvd, Kew 3101***