



Caregivers: looking after you

Medical traumatic stress

Having a child that is sick, injured, hospitalised or undergoing medical procedure/s can have an enormous impact on the emotional and physical wellbeing of caregivers. It can be very difficult for caregivers to see their child's pain and distress, leading them to feel helpless, guilty, anxious, overwhelmed or angry.

Caregivers have the challenge of supporting their child's recovery, whilst also coping with their own distress, managing family and friend reactions and juggling normal daily responsibilities. A wide range of reactions are common and normal within the first few weeks.

Caregivers often don't realise how valuable they are in helping buffer their child from stress. Managing your own stress means you can be more emotionally available and effective in supporting your child and other family members. Whilst it can feel impossible to prioritise, it is essential that you also look after your own mental health and wellbeing. Small, consistent self-care efforts can make a big difference during times of stress.



Five things that can help

Connection: Strengthen your social support network (talk to friends, family, hospital staff).



Targeted strategies: Try helpful coping strategies (relaxation and meditation, coping statements, engage in enjoyable activities).

Routine: Maintain or create healthy routines (sleeping, eating, physical activity).



Seek extra help: Accept or seek extra help and support for yourself when needed.

Identify emotions: Pay attention to your own emotional responses and triggers.

Scan this QR code for more information and resources. You can also talk to your child's treating team, GP, paediatrician or child health nurse for further advice.



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Disclaimer: This information has been produced by healthcare professionals as a guideline only and is intended to support, not replace, discussion with your child's doctor or healthcare professionals. Information is updated regularly, so please check you are referring to the most recent version. Seek medical advice, as appropriate, for concerns regarding your child's health.



Queensland Government