

Grief & Carer Fatigue

Caring for someone who is seriously ill, ageing, or nearing the end of life is an act of deep love. But it can also be physically exhausting, emotionally overwhelming, and isolating. When you're holding space for someone else's needs, it's easy to lose sight of your own.

If you're feeling drained, numb, irritable, tearful, or simply "not yourself," you're not alone. What you may be experiencing is carer fatigue, often intertwined with grief.

What Is Carer Fatigue?

Carer fatigue (also known as caregiver burnout) happens when the ongoing demands of caring leave you depleted. It can affect your:

- **Body** – chronic tiredness, sleep disruption, headaches, lowered immunity
- **Emotions** – sadness, anxiety, anger, guilt, resentment
- **Thinking** – difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, indecision
- **Relationships** – withdrawal, conflict, feeling misunderstood

Carer fatigue is not a sign of weakness. It's a natural response to prolonged stress and responsibility.

Grief While Caring

Many carers experience **anticipatory grief** – grieving the changes and losses that are happening before a death occurs. You may be grieving:

- The person as they once were
- The future you imagined
- The loss of shared routines and roles
- Your own sense of freedom or identity

After a loss, grief can feel compounded by months or years of caregiving. Sometimes exhaustion masks grief; sometimes grief intensifies exhaustion.

Signs You May Need Support

You might benefit from support if you notice:

- Feeling constantly overwhelmed or emotionally numb
- Guilt about wanting time away
- Increased irritability or tearfulness
- Changes in appetite or sleep
- Loss of interest in things you once enjoyed
- Thoughts such as "I can't keep doing this"

Reaching out is not giving up. It's strengthening your capacity to continue — or to recover.

How Counselling Can Help

Support offers a safe space to:

- Acknowledge the full complexity of your feelings
- Process anticipatory or post-loss grief
- Develop practical coping strategies
- Reconnect with your own needs and identity
- Set boundaries without guilt
- Build resilience and emotional steadiness

You deserve care, too.

You Don't Have to Do This Alone

Whether you are currently caregiving or navigating life after loss, support can help you breathe again.