



An Australian Government Initiative

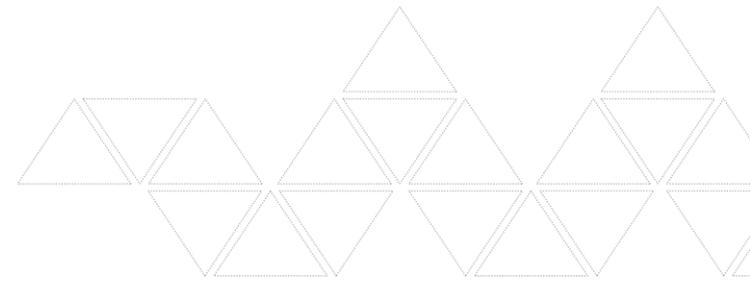
A network led by **Merri Health** supporting carers across Victoria



Merri Carer Services

Michelle Watson - Young Carer Engagement Officer

Acknowledgment



Who is a carer?

- A carer is a person who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend with disability, mental illness, chronic health issue, addiction or age-related condition for 6 months or more.
- Becoming a carer can be gradual, or it can happen suddenly due to accident or illness. Carers can be any age.
- All caring situations are different. Some carers look after another person full time, helping with their daily living, while other carers look after people for a few hours to help with everyday things.

Young Carers

... are carers under the age of 25.

**1 in 10 of Victorian carers are young people
and
1 in 10 Victorian young people are carers.**

Of these carers:

- 2/3 care for a parent
- 2/3 have their own mental health challenges
- ½ of their families live under the poverty line
- On average 1.5 years behind academically
- Only 4% of young carers who are the primary carer complete secondary education.

Does it surprise you that ...?

On average, adolescents who support someone at home for at least 2 hours per day fall up to 18 months behind in reading at Year 9 level, and 15 months in maths.

Research shows that young carers are less likely to go out or to entertain friends at home. This can lead to social isolation, loneliness and loss of friendships.

On average young carers miss about 50 school days each year because of their care role.

Many children and young people with care responsibilities don't identify as carers. Often, others don't see them that way either.





This is Benny. He loves footy and Fortnite. Benny's mother has depression. Sometimes she finds it hard to even get out of bed so Benny has to organise some of the meals at home and also support her emotionally.



This is Lenny He is a wiz at maths and pretty good on the clarinet. Lenny's dad had an accident and can't work at the moment and so Lenny works a part time job most nights after school to help pay the bills.

This is Penny. She loves Brooklyn Nine-nine and woodwork. Penny's mum drinks alcohol – too much. Penny is often up late worrying about her mum and cleaning up after her: just helping things at home run smoothly.



This is Kenny. He is a really good artist. Kenny's grandfather is sick and frail. He shouldn't be left alone in case he falls. Every Sunday Kenny spends most of the day at his grandfather's place, playing cards and just being there in case.

This is Jenny. She has more than 600 followers on Instagram. Jenny's brother has autism which, for her, means she needs to always walk with him home from school because it isn't safe for him to do so alone. Jenny therefore misses out on going to basketball training and being a part of the team.



Strengths of young carers



Empathy

Resilience

Acceptance
of differences

Balancing
various demands

Needs of Young Carers

- To feel understood and less alone
 - by peers and teachers.
- Time!
 - to be with friends, to sleep, to complete school-work...
- Financial help.
- To have help with their mental health (particularly anxiety)

What can you do?

- Be here now
- Know where to direct the student for further support
- Introducing ...



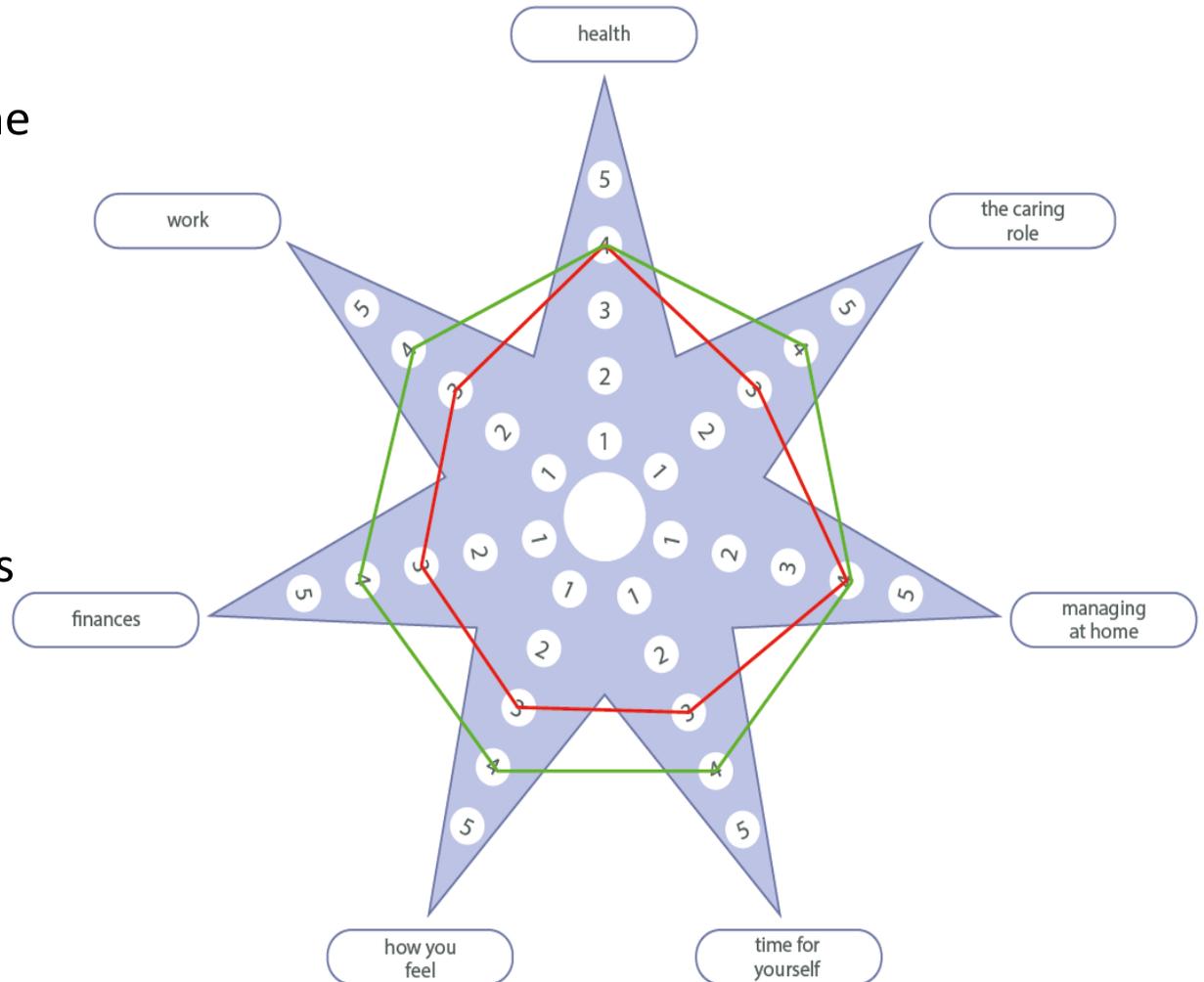
Support we can offer (all free!)

- Assessment and planning
- Carer-directed support packages
- Respite: emergency or planned
- Peer support
- Counselling
- Carer coaching
- Carer events ie. fun day trips and camps

... a whole-person approach ...

Assessment and goal-setting

- Carers who contact The Gateway will be asked to complete a 'Carer's Star' assessment with one of our support workers.
- The carer star assesses a carer's wellbeing across 7 domains:





- Peer support
- Counselling
- Tutor



- \$\$\$ for schooling needs
- Holiday activities

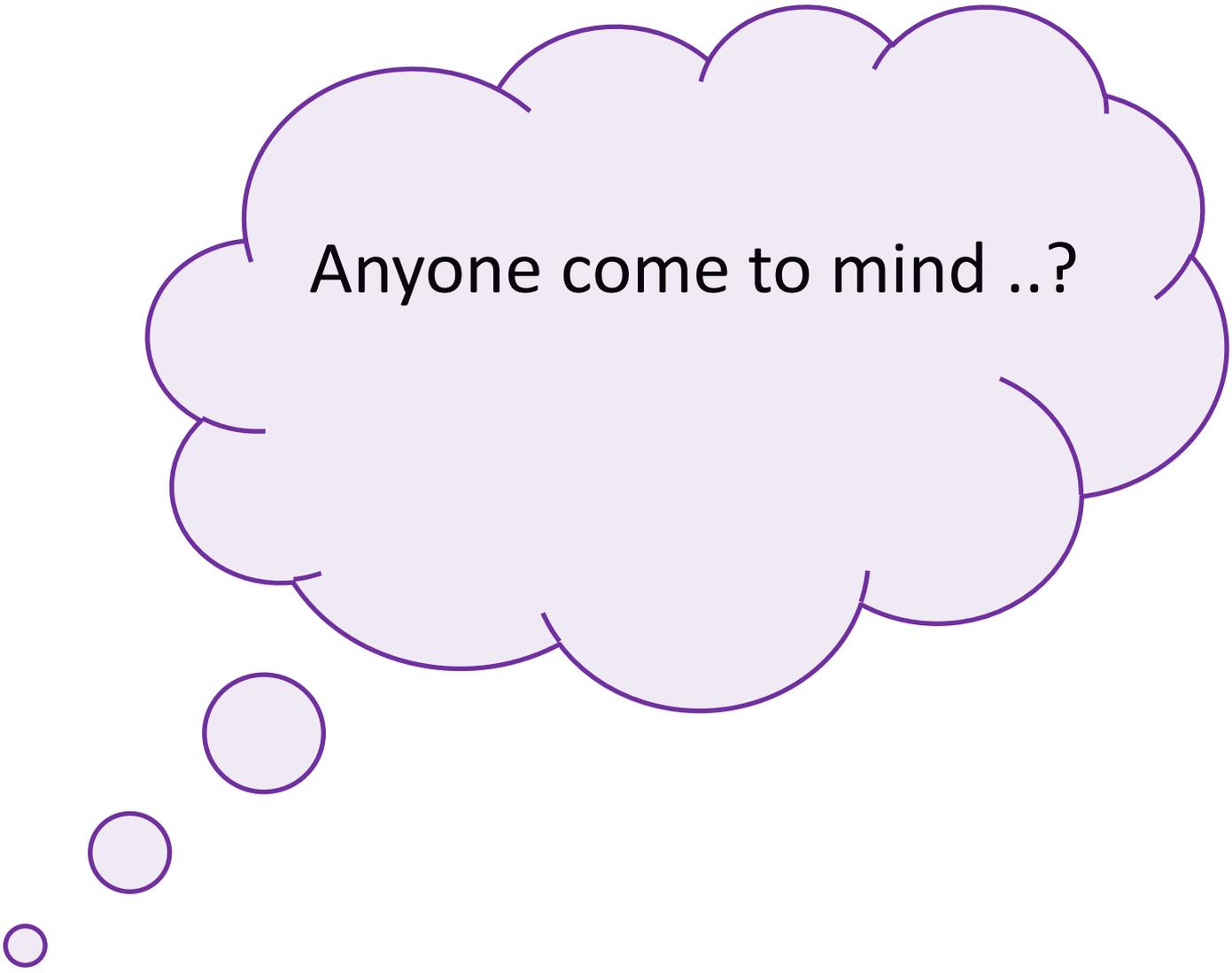


- Holiday camp
- Counselling

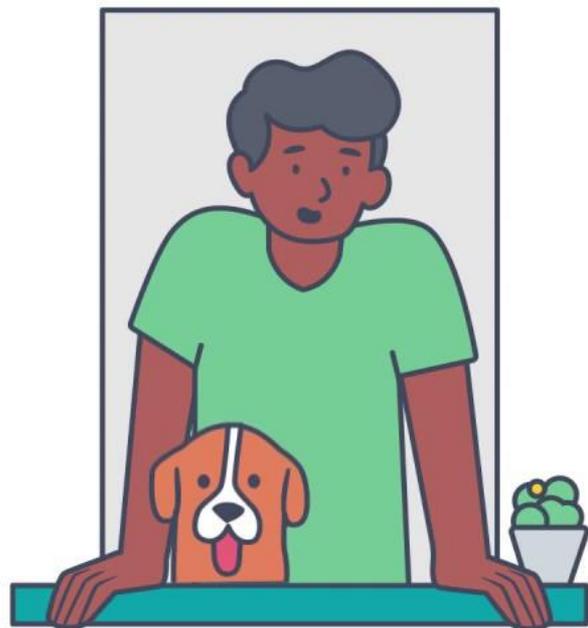
- Peer support
- Coaching/training
- Respite



- Respite
- \$\$\$ for hobby



Anyone come to mind ..?



Call Carer Gateway
1800 422 737

or request
someone to call you at
www.carergateway.gov.au

michelle.watson@merrihealth.org.au