



Introduction and guidance



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Introduction and guidance

Caring for adults is an introductory course for both paid and unpaid carers who are supporting people at home or in a residential, community or day care setting.

Whether you are in a paid or a voluntary caring role, or caring for a family member, this course will help to extend your knowledge and skills to develop your awareness of a range of topics: interpersonal skills for care, mental health problems, dealing with emergencies and looking after yourself as a carer. The course also considers the difference between supporting other people with their basic daily needs and more involved care responsibilities that will also depend on the needs of the cared-for person.

Each section of the course offers short, interactive quizzes to test your knowledge and provide you with the opportunity to earn a digital badge.

Successful completion of the course will enable you to gain a suite of online badges and a statement of participation. The badges are validated by the Social Partnerships Network (SPN), a group of organisations with a shared commitment to extending education opportunities to all those who wish to benefit. These courses do not carry any formal academic credit. However, they do provide a way to help you progress from informal to formal learning.

Caring for adults is one of a suite of six free online SPN-badged courses that aim to provide you with an opportunity to engage with learning informally, studying as much or as little of the course and at your own pace.

Guidance for accessing alternative formats

You can download this section of the course to study offline. The alternative formats offered that will best support offline study include Word, PDF and ebook/Kindle versions of the materials. The other alternative formats (SCORM, RSS, IMS, HTML and XML) are useful to those who want to export the course to host on another learning management system.

Although you can use the alternative formats offline for your own convenience, you do need to work through the online version of the course for full functionality (such as accessing links, using the audio and video materials, and completing the quizzes). Please use the downloads as convenient tools for studying the materials when away from the internet and return to the online version to ensure you can complete all activities that lead to earning the section badge.

In order to access full functionality in the online course, we recommend that you use the latest internet browsers, such as Internet Explorer 9 and above and Google Chrome version 49 and above.

If you have difficulties in streaming the audio-visual content, please make use of the available transcripts.

Structure of the course

This course has five sections, with each section focusing on a particular aspect of caring for adults:

- 1 **Good communication** looks at ways of communicating, improving your listening and interpersonal skills, and recording and reporting.
- 2 **Mental health awareness** considers types of mental health problems and how they affect the cared-for person and the role of the carer.
- 3 **Palliative and end-of-life care** examines how care is provided for people who receive palliative and end-of-life care, and what is meant by a good death.
- 4 **Positive risk-taking** explains why it is important to balance safe care with positive risk-taking to promote a more fulfilling life for the cared-for person.
- 5 **Looking after yourself** looks at the importance of carers looking after their own physical and emotional well-being and ways to manage stress.

Together they amount to approximately 15 hours of study time. Each section has a mixture of reading, video clips, activities and quizzes that will help you to engage with the course content.

A further section, **Taking my learning further**, will enable you to reflect upon what you have learned within this course. It also directs you to relevant websites and resources, which further relate to the development of your learning and career prospects.

Once you have studied a section, you will be asked to complete a short online quiz of no more than five questions per section. This helps to test and embed your learning. If you pass the quiz (and you do get more than one attempt!), you will be awarded with a downloadable badge for that section.

Caring for adults is designed to allow you to dip in and out of the resources and collect badges as you wish, so that you can study in small chunks to fit around your work and life commitments. If you choose to complete all sections of *Caring for adults* and collect the full set of badges, you can download a statement of participation that recognises your achievement. You may find this useful to show your employer as evidence of your learning. For more information on how to obtain your badges, read [What is a badge?](#)

Navigating the website

To find your way around this course, you simply click on the links. The home page has links to all the sections, quizzes and relevant resources. When you are in a section, the left-hand menu has links to that section's topics and its associated quiz. The menu also has links to the other sections of *Caring for adults* and to the resources section.

If you feel unsure, practise hovering your mouse over a link in the menu and clicking on it. This is the easiest way to move from page to page. You can also click on the 'Next: ...' link at the end of each page of text. Don't worry about breaking a link or damaging the web page – you won't. Have a go as soon as you can before you begin your study.

Why study this course?

John Rowe, one of the authors of this course, will now give you a bit of background into why you might like to study this course.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Welcome and introduction from the author](#)



If you are already a carer, you will find it helpful to consider how your role and experience matches the topics covered in the course. The guided activities throughout this course will help you to learn and reflect on your own role. If you are in a paid carer role, completion of *Caring for adults* will allow you to demonstrate to your employer your understanding of what it is like to be a carer. Your employer might also ask you to study this course as part of your induction into a new role, or for your professional development.

Although this course is primarily for carers, it also considers some issues experienced by both carers and cared-for people, for example stress, tiredness, depression and anxiety. We have therefore devoted Section 5 to looking after your own health and well-being, with much of the advice also applicable to the people you care for.

Learning outcomes

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- describe the role and responsibilities of carers
- recognise some of the basic concepts that will enable a person-centred approach to care
- identify the different needs of a cared-for person, at different stages of their care
- understand the impact that caring may have upon carers, and how this might be managed
- explain some of the legal responsibilities within the caring role.

Before you begin

Spend a few moments thinking about your current learning needs and opportunities by doing Activity 1 below.

Activity 1

Allow about 15 minutes

Below is a link to a short questionnaire to get you thinking about:

- What are your current priorities for learning?
- How does studying a short online course fit into your everyday lifestyle?
- What goals are you hoping to achieve by studying this course?

Questionnaire about your learning (1)

Hopefully, by the end of the course you will be able to reflect on your answers.

We hope you enjoy the course!

Acknowledgements

This free course was written by Frances Doran (Operations Training Supervisor at Leonard Cheshire Disability) and John Rowe (Lecturer for The Open University).

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Video

Course introductory video © The Open University