



# How social prescribing could improve health and wellbeing of carers

## What is social prescribing?

- Social prescribing is a personalised approach in general practice that supports the needs of consumers and carers who are experiencing social issues or emotional concerns that are impacting on their health.
- Through social prescribing consumers and carers can access a range of community support services and local activities that can help to reduce isolation and improve their health and wellbeing.
- Social prescribing improves outcomes for people by giving more choice and control over their lives and an improved sense of belonging through involvement in local community groups and activities.
- People of all ages can benefit from social prescribing. We know that social prescribing:
  - increases self-esteem and confidence, sense of control and empowerment
  - improves psychological or mental well-being, and mood
  - may reduce anxiety and/or depression
  - improves physical health and lifestyle, and
  - can help people feel more connected to community and less isolated.

## How can social prescribing help carers?

- Social prescribing can benefit carers of all ages by helping carers to access relevant services and resources in their local community that can help with social, emotional or practical needs.
- By connecting carers to local activities and support services, social prescribing can help carers feel better connected to their community, and can help build confidence in their ability to address their own health needs as well as the person receiving care.
- Through these connections and activities, carers can be more physically active and socially engaged, which improves their physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Carers can also benefit from social prescribing through helpful information about how to register as a carer, how to access respite services and other support through the Carer Gateway, how to connect with peer support groups or access counselling for specific concerns and challenges related to their caring roles and responsibilities.
- Social prescribing can help carers find a new sense of purpose and enjoy activities they might not otherwise have tried before, such as arts, cultural activities, walking, running, gardening, singing and spending more time outdoors.

## What are some examples of social scripts?

Social scripts draw upon local community services and activities to connect carers and other people in the community who may feel socially isolated.

Some examples of social scripts include:

- **Creative activities** – painting or drawing, crafts, dance, poetry, drama, or music
- **Learning new skills** – money management, cooking, organisational skills, learning a new language
- **Exercise** – walking groups, yoga, swimming and other sporting activities
- **Helpful information** – financial advice, housing support, community health programs, peer support groups, or access to respite services or bereavement support, and
- **Social activities** – lunch clubs, gallery groups, gardening or craft groups.

## How might social prescribing work for carers in Australia?

- While relatively new to Australia, social prescribing in other countries is provided through general practice where health professionals refer consumers and carers to a range of local, non-clinical services in response to identified needs.
- It is important for carers to think about their individual needs as they prepare to talk with general practice staff about a personalised plan that can guide access to local community services and activities. By having this conversation carers are supported to take the first step to join a community group and to meet new people, become more active and feel well.
- Carers may wish to ask the question – ‘what matters to me?’ as this can help identify priorities, interests and areas of concern to inform the kinds of supports and activities that will be of greatest benefit.

- Carers are encouraged to provide feedback on local activities and are supported to seek alternatives, if initial engagement in local groups or support services is not meeting their needs.
- Over time carers may feel better connected to their community, become more physically active and start to recognise improvements in their mental and physical health.

### More information

[Carer Gateway](#)

[Community Directory](#)

[Consumers Health Forum of Australia](#)

[Friends for Good - What is Social Prescribing?](#)

### References

- <sup>1</sup> Chatterjee H, Camic P, Lockyer B, & Thomson L. Non-clinical community interventions: a systematised review of social prescribing schemes, *Arts & Health, 10:2*, 97-123, 2018. DOI: 10.1080/17533015.2017.1334002
- <sup>2</sup> Zurynski, Y, Vedovi A, and Smith K-Lynn. [Social Prescribing: A rapid literature review to inform primary care policy in Australia.](#) NHMRC Partnership Centre for Health System Sustainability. Australian Institute of Health Innovation. Macquarie University. 2020.
- <sup>3</sup> Giebel C, Morley N, Komuravelli A. A socially prescribed community service for people living with dementia and family carers and its long-term effects on well-being. *Health and Social Care in the Community.* 2021;00:1-6. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13297>.
- <sup>4</sup> National Health Service (NHS) England and NHS Improvement. [Social Prescribing and Community-based Support - Summary Guide](#) June, 2020. p.8.
- <sup>5</sup> National Health Service (NHS) England and NHS Improvement. Ibid 2020.