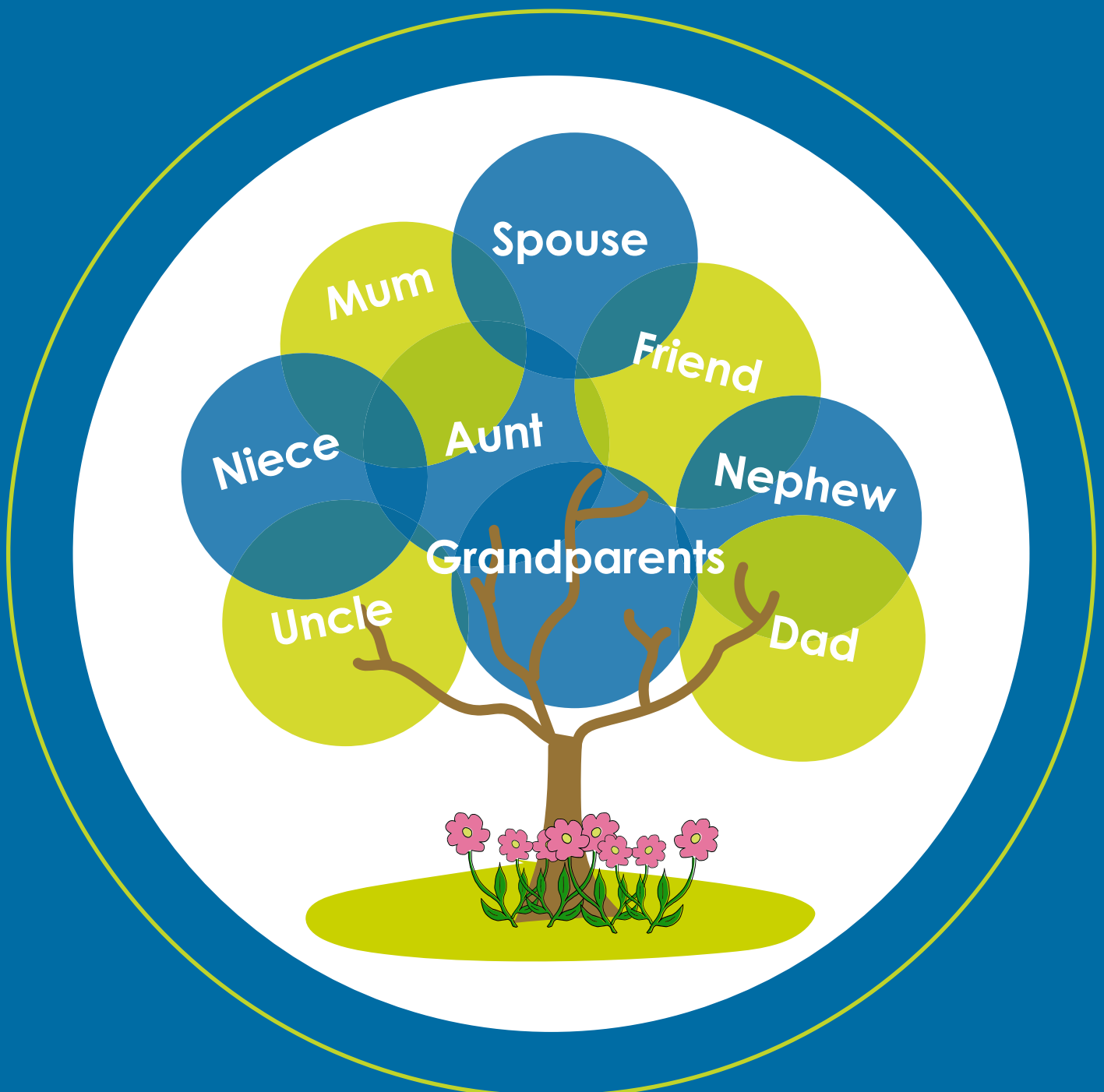


# Carer, Families and Friends guide

## Book 3





## Contents:

Being a Carer	<b>Page 3</b>
Your Health and Wellbeing	<b>Page 4</b>
Safeguarding	<b>Page 6</b>
Seeking Work	<b>Page 7</b>
Juggling Caring & Work	<b>Page 9</b>
Help with Travel Costs	<b>Page 10</b>
Frequently Asked Questions	<b>Page 11</b>
Counselling and Emotional Support for Carers	<b>Page 12-13</b>

# BEING A CARER

**Cygnnet Carers, Family & friends are here to help you while you care for a member of your family or a friend.**

You may not consider yourself a 'carer'; you are simply a husband, a wife, a son, a daughter, brother, sister, relation, friend or neighbour who is looking after someone you care for. Recognising that you are a 'carer' and that you sometimes need help and support is an important step. Getting information, advice and support at an early stage can enable you to continue caring with confidence and help prevent crisis. Being a carer can be both challenging and rewarding. For some it might be the difficulty of navigating the broad range of health and care services. For others it's the chance to develop a rare bond with someone. **Caring can make some people feel invisible and anonymous.** This is why, no matter what, we want to make sure that you feel you have a voice.

This handbook intends to offer you some information you may need to help you in your caring role.



# YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING



## Looking after yourself

You can let your GP (doctor) know that you're a carer and ask for this to be registered on your medical record.

### Most GP surgeries can support you by:

- providing a free flu vaccination
- helping you to access a COVID-19 vaccination or booster jab
- offering flexibility with appointment times, for both yourself and/or the person you care for
- agreeing to share information about the condition of the person you care for
- making sure you receive information about the help and support that's available
- referring you to organisations which support carers and their families
- offering you appointment times to fit in with your caring role
- understanding the impact on you and the person you care for if you're ill
- completing a health check to see if caring for someone is affecting your own health

## Healthy Living

Many local **pharmacies now offer a range of healthy living services**; from one-to-one support for quitting smoking to emergency contraception or NHS Health Checks.

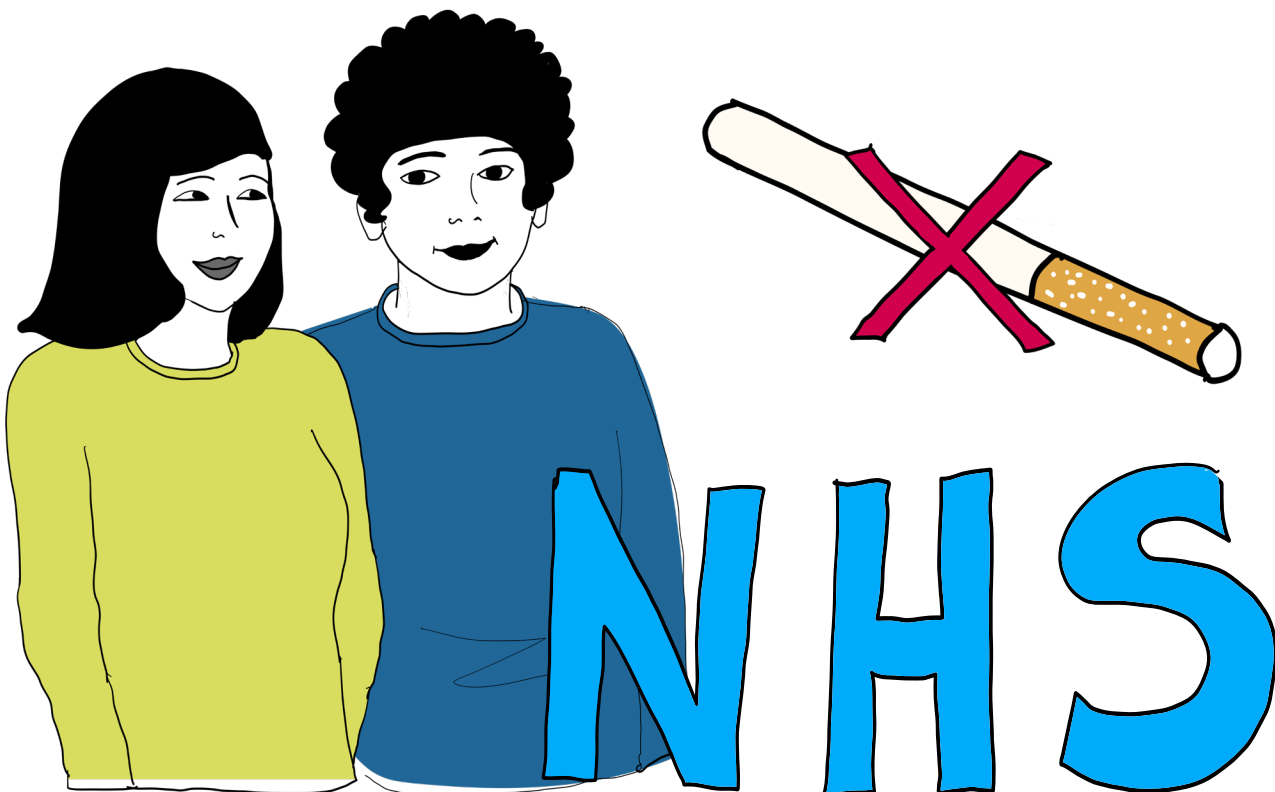
## Self-Care

If you, or someone you look after, is feeling under the weather, **ask your pharmacist first**. They can advise you about common minor illnesses, such as diarrhoea, coughs, headache, travel health advice or sore throats. They can also advise which medicines can be taken together or when you may need to see your GP. Your **pharmacy may also offer home delivery, prescription management**, Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) and more. If you have any questions about medications, staying well, or services available from your pharmacy, ask your local pharmacy team.

## Medicine Disposal

If you have medicines in your home that are no longer needed, return them to the pharmacy to safely dispose of them. Check your medicine cabinet regularly for medicines which are out-of-date or no longer needed, and never put them in the bin or down the toilet.

Providing care for someone can sometimes be stressful, and can take its toll on your own health and wellbeing. If you feel you need to speak to someone about any stress or anxiety, or if you are feeling low, you can always contact your GP, but some organisations can offer you help and support.



# SAFEGUARDING

**We all have the right to a life free from abuse and harm.** Everyone should feel they are safe, able to make their own decisions and be respected and listened to. Some of us are less able to stand up for our rights and protect ourselves. **Abuse can happen in a number of ways** (physical, sexual, psychological, domestic abuse, modern slavery, financial abuse, sadly the list goes on) but it's important to remember that you do not need to know the categories or have the full picture to raise a concern.

If you believe an individual in our care may be suffering abuse, contact the service straight away and the Managers or Safeguarding Leads will support you with the concern, this may involve reporting it to the Local Authority and each service has their own 'Local Procedures' which explain who to speak to. You can remain anonymous if you wish, but please give us as much information as you can. If it's an emergency, call the Police on 999. You are not alone. **We can help.**



# SEEKING WORK



If you've had time out of work to care for someone, you may find the transition back to paid employment a little daunting, but caring can give you skills and experience that employers value. The **National Careers Service helps you highlight the skills you have** acquired to choose or change your career. They even have a **free "Skills Health Check"** to help you decide what jobs might be right for you.

The **National Carers Service is free and available locally by appointment.** National Careers Service

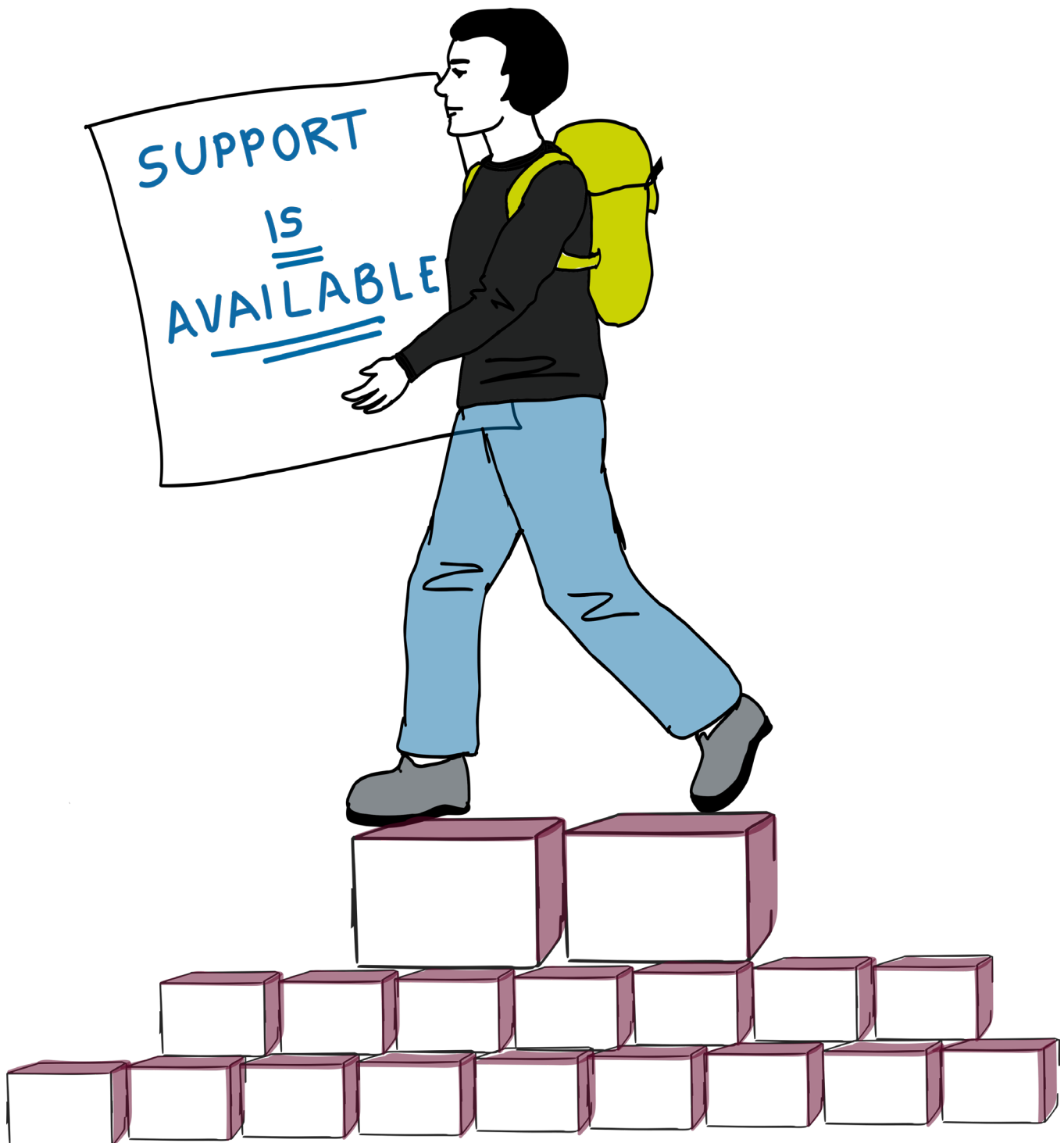
T: 0800 100 900 [www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](http://www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk)

## Work Preparation Support for Carers

A government scheme called “**Work Preparation Support for Carers**” provides you with the help and support you may need to make a successful transition into work. In some cases, you may get assistance to cover the cost of replacement care while you attend interviews or take part in training.

To find out more, go to:

[www.gov.uk/moving-from-benefits-to-work/help-for-parents-and-carers](http://www.gov.uk/moving-from-benefits-to-work/help-for-parents-and-carers)





# JUGGLING CARING & WORK

Working and caring for someone can be a tricky balancing act.

Talking to your employer is normally the best way to start is to let your employer know that you're a carer.



# FINANCIAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR CARERS



There is a range of financial support available for carers and the person they care for, it is important that you claim any benefits and credits you are entitled to.

**Benefits** – You might be able to claim Working tax credit, Child tax credit, Pension Credit, Council Tax Support, Child Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, or Universal Credit.

**Grants and discounts** – You may be able to apply for extra money from grants or benevolent funds. If you are a carer visiting a relative or friend you cannot claim travel costs but you may be able to apply for a loan or grant from the Social Fund through your local Jobcentre Plus office or through a local authority Welfare Provision Scheme. Patients may be able to claim if an escort has been agreed in advance on medical grounds or if a child is under 16

**Carer's Allowance** – You may be able to claim Carer's Allowance if you spend at least 35 hours a week caring.

**Health and care costs** – You, and/or the person you care for, may be able to get help with health costs such as prescriptions, eye tests, dental treatment and with arranging and paying for care and support.

**Housing and heating costs** – As an unpaid carer, you and the person you care for can get help with Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, mortgage payments, heating your home and extra help from energy suppliers.

**Carer's Credit** – There are ways to ensure your pension is protected if you have had to give up employment so you can care for someone. These including NI credits or Carer's Credit.

For more information, and for resources to see if you are eligible for any of the above, visit



[www.carers.org/money-and-benefits/intro](http://www.carers.org/money-and-benefits/intro) and [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)

# COUNSELLING AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR CARERS

Providing care for someone can at times be stressful, and can take its toll on your own health and wellbeing. If you feel you need to speak to someone about any stress or anxiety, or if you are feeling low, you can always contact your GP, but there are also organisations that can offer you help and support.

**Samaritans** Contact the service any time you like on the **freephone 116 123**

**Saneline** Provides practical help, emotional support and specialist information to individuals affected by mental health problems, their family, friends and carers. **Telephone 0300 304 7000**

**Mind Infoline** A mental health information service to service users, professionals, carers and the general public. Telephone 0300 123 3393

NHS 111 Provides information and advice about health, illness and health services. Telephone: 111

**FRANK** Free and support, counselling and information for anyone affected by drug misuse. Telephone: 0300 123 6600

**National Domestic Violence Helpline** Advice and support for anyone suffering from domestic violence 0808 2000 247

**LGBT helpline** for anyone considering issues around their gender 0300 330 0630 Support-line emotional support for individuals about any issues 01708 765200

**Big White Wall** is an online mental health and wellbeing service offering self-help programmes, creative outlets and a community that cares [www.bigwhitewall.com](http://www.bigwhitewall.com)

**The Counselling Directory** can help you find a local counsellor or therapist.

The Counselling Directory T: 0333 325 2500

E: [info@counsellingdirectory.org.uk](mailto:info@counsellingdirectory.org.uk)

[www.counselling-directory.org.uk](http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk)

A national out-of-hours mental health helpline, a non-emergency email and text service, and an online forum.

## **SANE**

T: 0300 304 7000 [www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)

24 hour emotional support to anybody experiencing distress, despair, or suicidal feelings. You can also talk to someone face to face if needed.

### **The Silver Line**

T: 0800 470 8090 [www.thesilverline.org.uk](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk) A range of support for people with common mental health and emotional issues. It's free for anyone aged 16 and over, and you can refer yourself or be referred by your GP, or any other health or social care professional

### **Chill4us**

T: 01603 340193

[www.chill4uscarers.co.uk](http://www.chill4uscarers.co.uk)

**A listening service and chat room.** The helpline is available on Monday and Tuesday, 10am - 4pm while the webchat forum is available 24-hours a day.

Carers UK

T: 0808 808 7777

[www.carersuk.org/forum](http://www.carersuk.org/forum)

Details of hundreds of services that can help you to make positive changes to your lifestyle, from quitting smoking to losing weight.

### **National Autistic Society (NAS)**

Autism Helpline: 0808 800 4104

Website: [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Open Britain**

T: 0845 124 9971

E: [info@tourismforall.org.uk](mailto:info@tourismforall.org.uk) [www.tourismforall.org.uk](http://www.tourismforall.org.uk)

A one-stop shop for accessible tourism in the UK.

### **Get me out the 4 Walls**

E: [referrals@getmeout.org.uk](mailto:referrals@getmeout.org.uk) [www.getmeout.org.uk](http://www.getmeout.org.uk)

Offers respite breaks and holidays for disabled people and carers.

### **Revitalise**

T: 0303 303 0145

E: [info@revitalise.org.uk](mailto:info@revitalise.org.uk) [www.revitalise.org.uk](http://www.revitalise.org.uk)

Offers short-term respite care for when you need a break.

### **The Respite Association**

T: 01566 783 383

E: [help@respiteassociation.org](mailto:help@respiteassociation.org) [www.respiteassociation.org](http://www.respiteassociation.org)

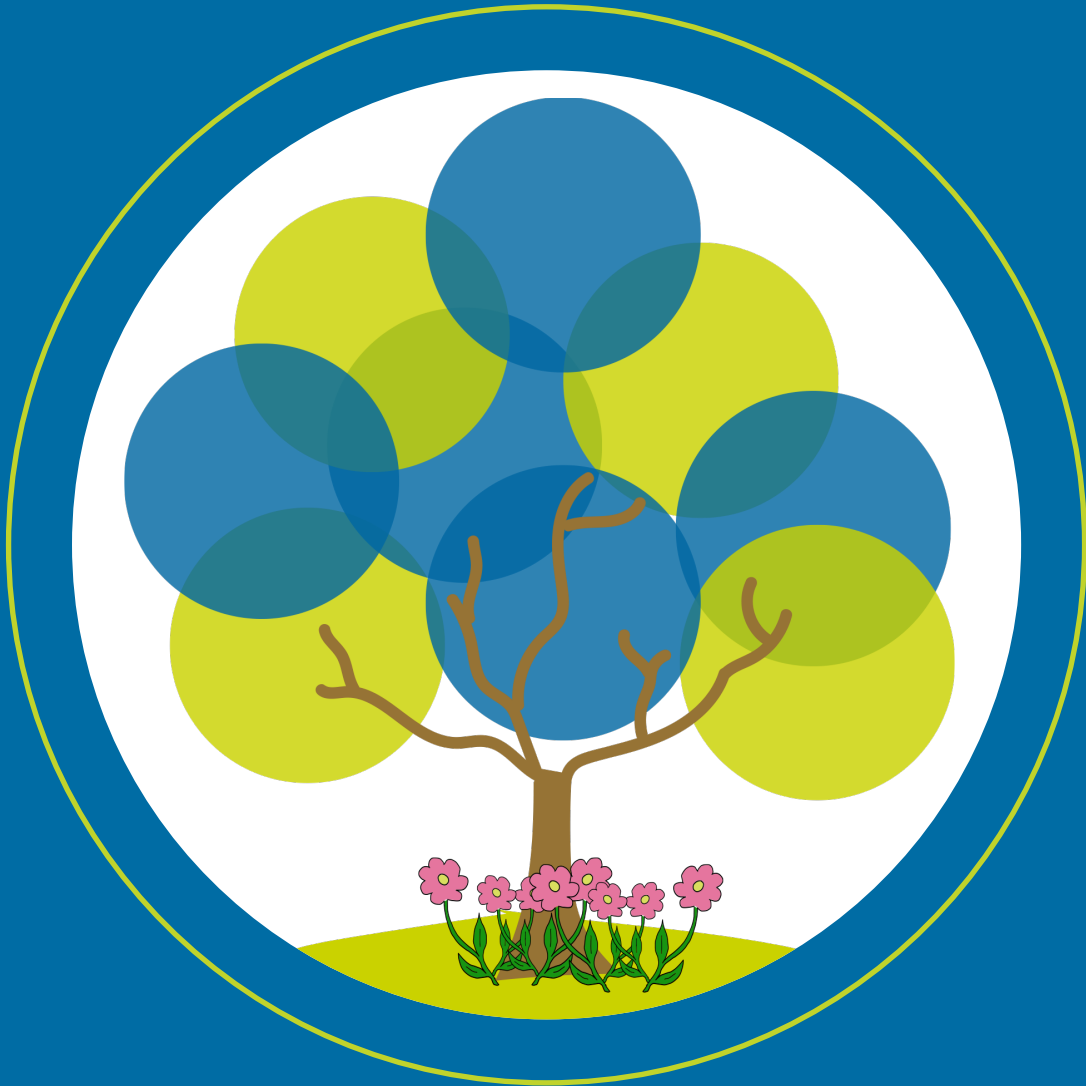
### **The Mindful Way Workbook**

An 8-week Program to Free yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress.

John Teasdale, Mark Williams and Zindel Segal.

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**Follow us on social media:**  
[www.cygnethealth.co.uk](http://www.cygnethealth.co.uk)



**Family, Friends and Carers**  
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