

Carer Burnout Checklist

Recognise the Signs — Protect Your Wellbeing

Caring for someone you love is one of the most meaningful things a person can do. It is also one of the most demanding. Carer burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that can affect anyone in a caring role — and it is far more common than most people realise. Recognising the signs early and taking practical steps to protect your own wellbeing is not a weakness. It is essential.

1. Recognising the Signs of Carer Fatigue

Physical Signs

- Persistent tiredness that does not improve with sleep or rest.
- Frequent headaches, muscle tension, or unexplained physical pain.
- Lowered immune response — getting sick more often than usual.
- Changes in appetite — eating significantly more or less than normal.
- Disrupted sleep patterns, difficulty falling or staying asleep.

Emotional Signs

- Feeling constantly overwhelmed, helpless, or that there is no end in sight.
- Increased irritability, frustration, or short temper — especially toward the person you care for.
- Feeling resentful about your caring responsibilities, followed by guilt about those feelings.
- A sense of hopelessness, sadness, or loss of enjoyment in things you once valued.
- Feeling emotionally numb or detached — going through the motions without real engagement.

Social & Behavioural Signs

- Withdrawing from friends, family, and social activities.
- Neglecting your own medical appointments, hobbies, or personal needs.
- Increasing reliance on alcohol, medication, or other coping mechanisms.
- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or completing everyday tasks.

Important: Burnout does not mean you have failed as a carer. It means you have been giving too much for too long without enough support. Seeking help is the right thing to do — for both you and the person you care for.

2. When to Consider Respite Care

Respite care provides temporary relief for carers by arranging alternative support for the person with disability. It is a legitimate, funded NDIS support — not a last resort. Consider respite when:

- Your stress levels are consistently affecting your own health, sleep, or relationships.
- You have medical, legal, or personal appointments that require uninterrupted time.
- You are facing a family emergency or unexpected crisis.
- You simply need time to rest, recharge, and feel like yourself again.
- You are at risk of being unable to continue in your caring role without a break.

Tip: Respite care can be funded under the NDIS as a Core Support under 'Assistance with Daily Life'. It may also be available through the Carer Gateway — call 1800 422 737 for free carer support services.

3. Planning a Short Break — Step by Step

Step 1 — Start Small	Even a few hours per week can make a meaningful difference. Begin with short breaks and increase gradually as trust is established.
Step 2 — Choose Consistency	Select a support worker who can provide consistent, reliable care. Consistent workers reduce anxiety for both the participant and the carer.
Step 3 — Share the Routine	Provide the worker with a written summary of daily routines, preferences, triggers, and communication strategies.
Step 4 — Plan Ahead	Use your NDIS plan's Core Supports or Short Term Accommodation (STA) funding. Ask your coordinator or plan manager about what is available.
Step 5 — Check In After	After the first break, review how it went. Adjust timing, routine, or the worker match if needed.

4. Your Rights as a Carer

- You have the right to be **recognised and respected** as an expert on the person you care for.
- You have the right to **access information** about supports and services available to you.
- You have the right to **take a break** without guilt and without jeopardising the care of your loved one.
- You have the right to **participate in planning** the supports your family member receives.
- Under the **Carers Recognition Act 2008**, your role and contribution are formally acknowledged by the Australian Government.



5. Where to Get Help

Havenridge Care	0447 854 645 — we can discuss respite options tailored to your situation.
Carer Gateway	1800 422 737 — free counselling, coaching, and carer-directed support.
NDIS Contact	1800 800 110 — to discuss respite funding in your plan.
Lifeline	13 11 14 — 24/7 crisis support and emotional assistance.
Beyond Blue	1300 22 4636 — mental health support for carers and families.

Tip: You don't need to wait until you're at breaking point. Reach out early — it's much easier to prevent burnout than to recover from it. Our team at Havenridge Care is here to help you plan practical, sustainable support.