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Taking care of someone with an anxiety disorder can be extremely testing at times, especially if you have never suffered yourself, but you may be surprised how much of a major role you can play in helping the person recover. Firstly it is important to accept that they are not “putting it on” or “making up” the symptoms. What they are experiencing is genuine, frightening and often life-destroying.

Being a carer of someone with an anxiety disorder can be a lonely job at times, but as a carer you are certainly not alone. Recent statistics show that there are over 6.5 million carers in the UK at the present time. It may be a comfort to know that by helping and supporting your friend/family member you are aiding recovery. A little understanding goes a long way.

Talking to other people in the same boat as yourself can be a comfort. Maybe there are local groups in your area that could put you in touch with them? You could try your local Library, Citizens Advice Bureau or the local Doctor’s surgery for details.

Undertaking a carer’s role can put a huge pressure on you, it can also cause conflicts or a strain on your relationship with the person you are looking after. Which is why it is so important to not only try and understand what the sufferer is experiencing but also take care of your own health and wellbeing.

Here are No Panic’s top ten tips for carers:

1. Take time for yourself. You cannot take care of others if you are mentally and physically drained yourself.
2. Learn more about the person you are caring for and their disorder. Our website has lots of useful information. The more you know, the more help you can give.
3. Talk to other carers. It is always comforting to know you are not alone. Join us on our Facebook group and share stories with others going through the same things.
4. Ask for help when and if you need it. You are not a failure or showing weakness by reaching out, we all need a bit of help now and then.
5. Accept help if it is offered. You may want to do everything yourself. You may want to be the carer all the time, but if someone offers then accept gratefully. People offer because they want to help.
6. Look after your own wellness. Diet and exercise are important for everyone to stay in good health. Listen to your body and its needs.
7. Rest. We all need to shut off and recharge our batteries every day. A good night sleep is essential to cope with daily trials.
8. Don’t cut yourself off. Staying in touch with family and friends is very important. If you are not always able to get out then a quick call or even texting is a great way to catch up.
9. Check out your rights. If you have given up your regular work to become a carer, you may be eligible to certain services or funding.
10. Give us a call. Our help line is open every day of the year from 10-00 am to 10-00pm. This is not just for people who suffer from anxiety but for you too. Sometimes you need to talk to someone.