



Greg Smith first started to look after his mom, Lyn, in his early 20s after she was diagnosed with cancer. At the time, Greg was working full-time in Sydney as a storeman. Greg got a part-time job near his mom, so he could accompany her to hospital treatments and appointments. She was then diagnosed with a degenerative spinal condition in addition to other health conditions.

Greg's parents are now divorced but for several years following Lyn's cancer diagnosis, his Dad's health was also of concern. "During this time, my father developed a number of mental health conditions and was eventually diagnosed with bipolar disorder, which meant he had to retire early."

While his mom was being treated for her cancer, Greg managed to get back to working and studying Health Sciences at a local University. However, Lyn needed around-the-clock support, so he took on the role as her full-time carer.

"I mainly help out with making sure my mom is getting the correct medications, scheduling her medical appointments, transport, cooking, cleaning and assisting with mobility."

Although Greg was undertaking the role of a carer, it was something that he didn't initially recognize. "It took me 10 years to self-identify as a carer. For me, I was just doing what comes naturally – looking after my mom. I know I'm not the only one and men especially feel it's something that is often challenging to come to terms with."

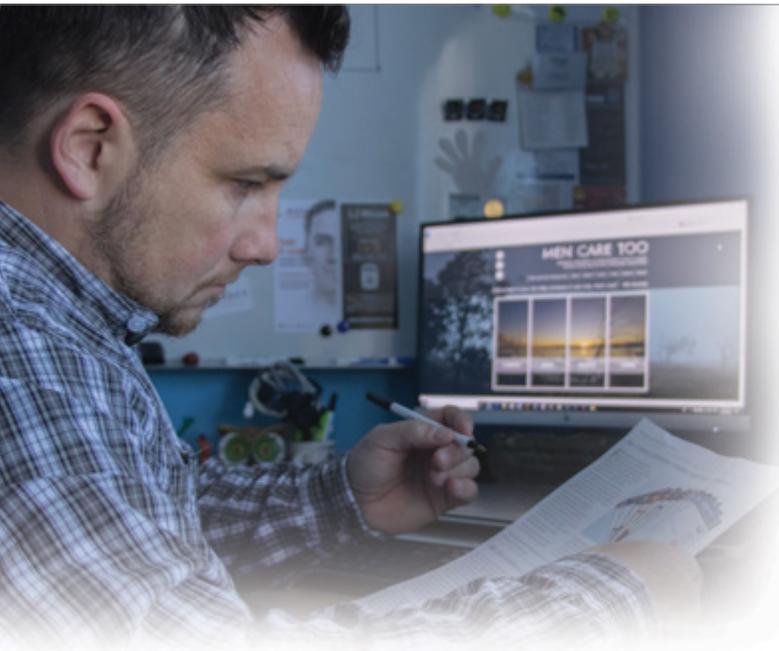
Greg spends much of his time looking after Lyn and like many other carers, he often neglects his own physical and mental health.

"Making time and finding the motivation to exercise or socialize is hard for many carers. I feel guilty doing things for myself or taking time out, but over the past few years I've realized how important having a break is."



Greg Smith

Faces of Caregiving - Australia



“ I would not change anything because I love my life now, but there are things I wish I'd been more aware of, such as maintaining social connections and staying physically active. ”

Greg believes that for many men, including himself, the most challenging aspect when caring for someone is taking advantage of support services and organizations that can help.

“I'm a dedicated advocate for men in caring roles. I founded the online community Men Care Too, which focuses on the awareness, well-being and engagement of men in unpaid, informal caring roles. I realized many men were in a caring role but unaware of the support available to them.”

Greg is a former Vice President of Candles Cancer Support Group Inc. He serves as a facilitator of carer peer support groups, encouraging and supporting men and women in different caring roles.

Join the movement at
www.embracingcarers.com