

## Overview – Caring for Yourself

Self-care is really, really important. You know, the emphasis is on the person that's sick.

There is one day a week, which I found, at first, this is selfish, I should be looking after this person. I now know that that day is – I use a Thursday, that is my day, that is my day for doing what I need to do.

The one thing that helped me relax was holistic therapies so I availed to that.

I had heard about reflexology, and I have to be honest with you now, I'm a convert. If somebody wants my feet to do reflexology, they can have my feet, because it's the easiest way of relaxing and I know for a fact that, within five minutes here, I'm generally snoring, but I'm told that that's actually a great compliment to the therapist.

My escapism was reading. I could lose myself in a book. I liked a good thriller, a good crime story, but for a long time, whenever Colin was ill, I read silly romance books because you didn't have to think about them. You could just read the story and you could get lost in it and there wasn't a big plot, there wasn't a big theme.

You might prefer just to put the television on, get a favourite movie, and just sit back, get the recliner, put the feet up and chill out!

I know it sounds silly, but I embroidered pictures and things, and I painted ceramic ornaments and I did all that there.

Everybody thinks art therapy is painting, just lovely little paintings, which I can't paint, right? I can't draw – I can do a stick-man. But this is art in a different format. Art is great for getting your emotions out.

I've seen me sitting up to four o'clock in the morning and just completely and entirely lost. There was no cancer. There was just me doing this craft.

The carer is as important as the person undergoing treatment, and you do tend to neglect yourself, there's no doubt about that, because one of the easiest things that happens is: why would you sit down and make a dinner when the person doesn't want to eat? So, you don't make a dinner, so you'll have a slice of toast or you'll have a banana or you'll have an apple. It's getting...it's getting your mindset right.

If you're not well, then you're not fit to help them through their journey. Even like 10 minutes, even just take yourself out for a walk or like go read a book or just something to take your mind off it, so you're not constantly...it's not constantly...like you're not living it every day.

I find it's great to get out because other people can just lift you, and something can be said in the conversation that just gives you a whole new insight into...maybe I'm not as bad as I thought I was.

If you have your family around or your partners just, and, I mean, you feel like offloading, just offload to them.

In my previous occupation, counselling was occasionally offered, but it was...if you decided you were the one that wanted counselling, you would be scoffed at. I discovered that it's not the case. It gives you a perspective on things that you're struggling with.