



# When You're Caring for Everyone Else: A Gentle Guide for Sandwich Carers

If you're caring for both children and an ageing family member you might be feeling stretched thin.

The demands often feel relentless, and at times, you may feel invisible.

Many people don't realise they are carers. They simply see themselves as parents or children doing their best to keep everything together.

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## Why This Feels So Hard

With a lack of time to rest or process, you may be feeling:

- pulled in two directions
- guilty, whatever you choose to do
- emotionally strained
- overwhelmed by practical responsibilities

## Signs You're Overstretched

You might notice:

- feeling numb, tearful, or emotionally drained
- being constantly on edge or irritable
- struggling to switch off or sleep deeply
- forgetting things or finding it hard to focus
- resenting the situation, then feeling guilty for it

These are not signs of failure — they are signs your system is under pressure.

## A quiet reminder

You can't meet everyone's needs all the time. It doesn't mean you are failing.

## Three Small Things to Try This Week

Not everything has to change at once. Small shifts can make a difference.

### **1. A 5-minute pause**

Step away, even briefly. No fixing, no planning — just pause.

### **2. Name what's most important today**

Ask yourself: What truly needs my energy today — and what can wait?

### **3. Ask for one small thing**


Something specific and manageable, like:


- "Could you pick up some shopping?"
- "Can you sit with Mum for half an hour?"

## When Guilt Kicks In (softer versions)

If saying no feels hard, remember, boundaries don't have to be firm or forceful to still be clear. A simple, honest sentence is enough.

 "I can't take that on right now."

 "I'm a bit stretched today, but I can look at it tomorrow."

 "Let me think about what I can realistically do to help."

## Where to Get Support

You don't have to figure this out alone.

Support might include:

- talking to your GP about how things are affecting you
- looking into local carers' support services
- exploring flexible working options if you're employed
- speaking with others who understand

Even a little support can make things feel easier.

## Your Next Step

You don't have to keep carrying this on your own.

Counselling can offer you space to pause, make sense of what you're holding, and find ways forward that feel more manageable.

If you feel ready, you're very welcome to reach out.

<https://caringcounsellingworthing.co.uk>