

Bel McDonald







“When you have a disabled child you are catapulted into a life you weren’t expecting. You don’t have the perfect child that you were imagining and your life is changed forever. It feels like everyone else is able to get on with their perfect lives, with their perfect children whilst we just have to struggle on our own.”

“Society is driven to be perfect. We need our children in this world to help people appreciate difference.”



Children & Families Act 2014 defines a Parent Carer as “a person aged 18 or over who provides or intends to provide care for a disabled child for whom the person has parental responsibility.”



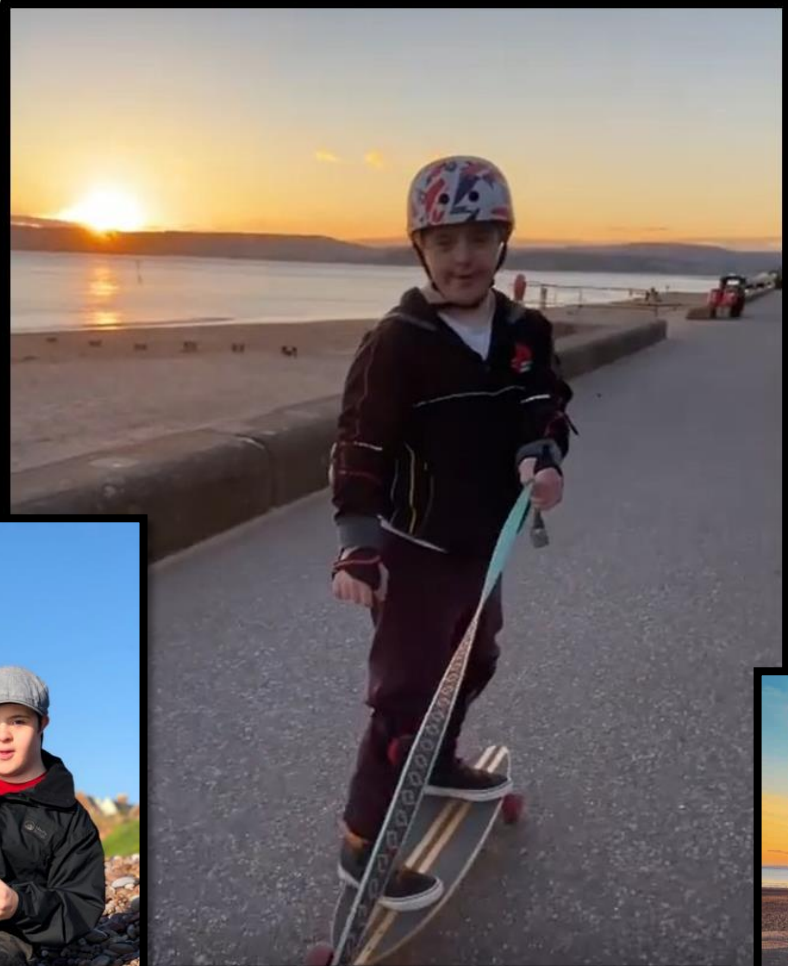
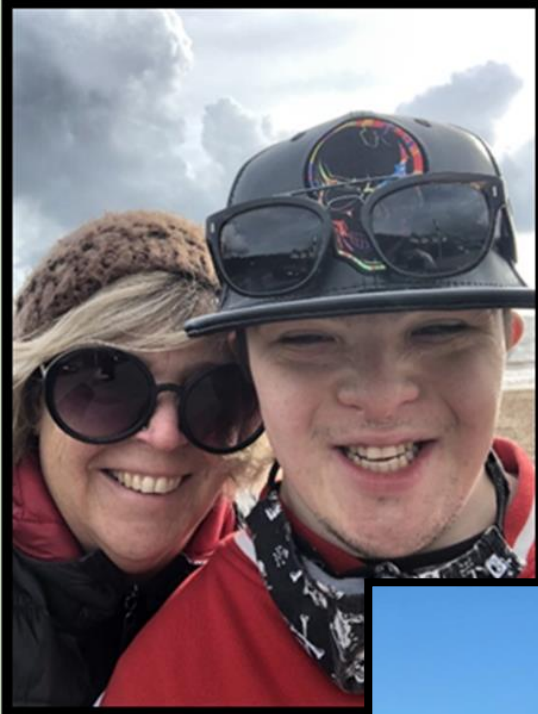
Parenting is a difficult enough job, but if you are providing care and support over and above what might normally be expected for a child of a similar age, you may have additional practical, emotional and financial pressures and worries. This may in turn have an adverse impact on your own well-being, physical health, social connections and relationships.





Recognizing yourself as a Carer
is the first step in
accessing the support you need.





Healthy PARENT CARERS

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER MEDICAL SCHOOL

NIHR National Institute for Health Research

UKRI Economic and Social Research Council

PenCRU & Family Faculty making childhood disability research more relevant, useful and accessible









Healthy

PARENT CARERS

Improving parent carers' health
and wellbeing

Bel McDonald





PenCRU
@Pen_CRU



" absence of support from services, parents of disabled children have to plug the gap ... this does not come without consequence to the health of parents"

87% My mental health has been negatively affected


82% My physical health has been negatively affected

[#FailedAndForgotten](#)



 **Disabled Children's Partnership** @DCPcampaign · Mar 7

 We're thrilled to be launching our new research today.

 Our new report reveals how education, health and social services are failing in their duty of care for disabled children.

 Read the full report here: bit.ly/FAFReport #FailedAndForgotten

Over 1 million children have special educational needs or disability in the UK



Research shows that parent carers of disabled children are more likely to experience:



Higher levels of physical ill health that impacts their ability to care for their children



Higher levels of stress and depression including increased suicide risk



Social isolation, stepping back from work and hobbies to care for their children



Existing health promotion programmes as inadequate and insensitive to their circumstances

Covid-19 has exacerbated this further





Stairs instead of lift



CONNECT

- Making time to meet
- Talking to a delivery person
- Smiling
- Saying Hello
- Small talk at the school gate
- Meet new people
- New skills
- Social Media
- Exercises our brain
- Brings confidence and satisfaction
- Gardening
- Develops patience
- Walk
- Podcasts, TED talks
- Dancing
- Be active with our children
- Makes you feel good
- Sport
- Be grateful
- Putting our phone down
- Enjoy the moment
- Be active with our children
- Taste, listen
- Offering support
- Touch, smell, look
- Helping others/ Volunteering
- Time with partner and friends
- Giving self-treats
- Thanking people
- Helping others/ Volunteering
- Giving time to others
- Giving self-treats
- Thanking people
- Enjoying a treat
- Celebrate with others
- Drinking water
- Home-made food
- Exercise
- See friends
- Take a bath
- Eating slowly
- Time in nature
- Watching TV
- Relaxation apps
- Reduce screen time
- Reduce caffeine
- Sleepy food
- Comfy bed, room, and sleep routine
- Deep breathing
- Laugh
- Reduce screen time
- Relaxation apps
- Comfy bed, room, and sleep routine

KEEP LEARNING

BE ACTIVE

TAKE NOTICE

EAT WELL

GIVE

RELAX

SLEEP

Healthy PARENT CARERS | healthyparentcarers.org

PeriCU & Family Faculty

Seriberia



Our Delivery Partners



contact
For families
with disabled children



Look



together for
children
SUNDERLAND



Our Voice



Northumberland
County Council

Family Hubs
Here for everyone



PARENT CARERS TOGETHER



Bournemouth Christchurch Poole



What's the impact?



Proven positive changes in lifestyle and wellbeing



Supporting parent carer health and wellbeing earlier before crisis point



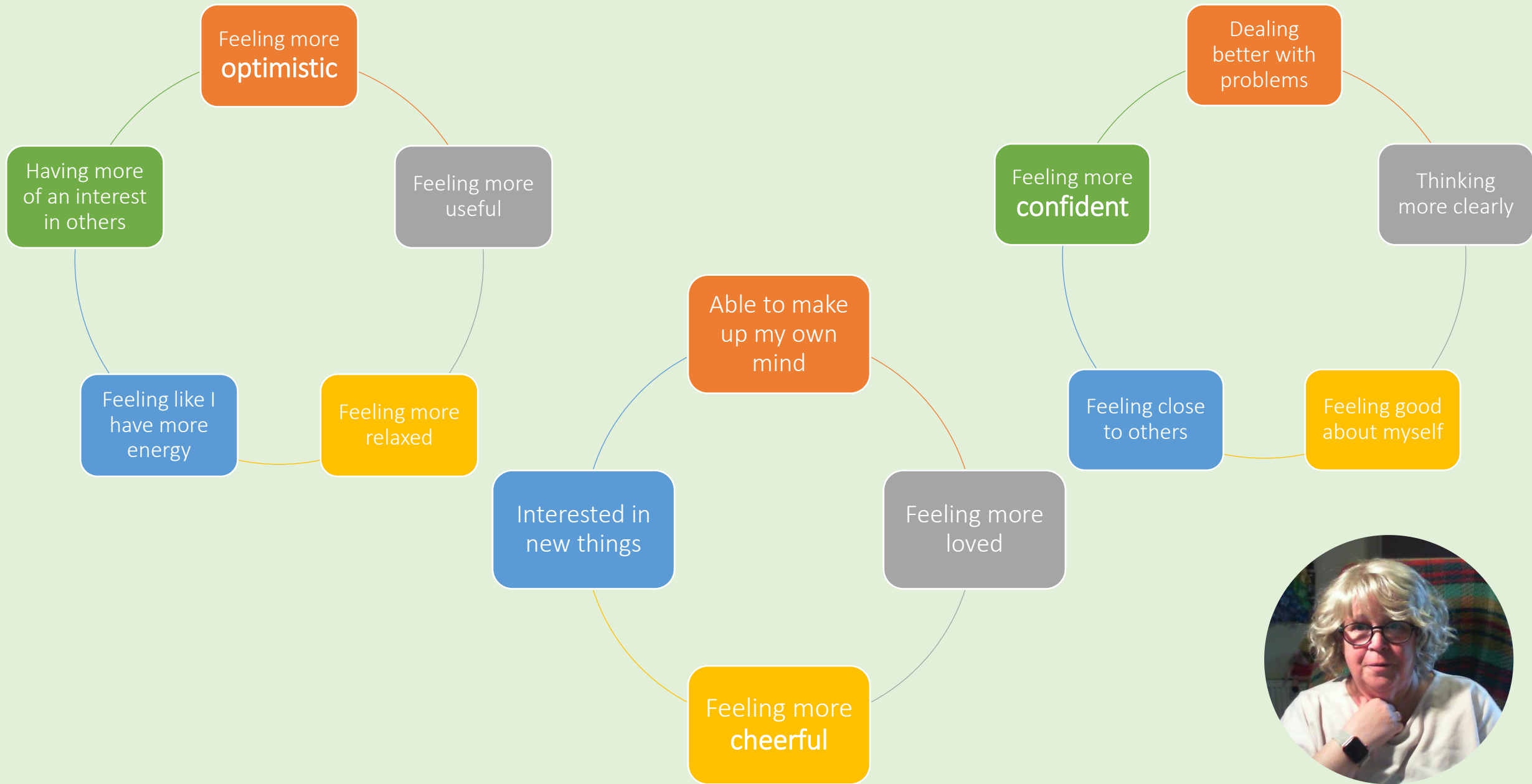
Creating a support network for parent carers

Current Research has shown:



- The parent carer identity is the priority.
- Being a “good” parent carer means investing most of your time and energy into meeting the needs of your child.
- This allows for less time at work and less time socialising outside of the family.
- It also means feeling guilty about performing any form of self-care.
- Parent carers are also let down by broader society, where public services and the general public make life harder.
- Changes in **self-perception** and **social connections** are necessary for this situation to change.











“It’s a fantastic course for parent carers. I made some wonderful friends and made positive healthier changes.”

Catherine, East Riding





“I make sure I take some time out for myself, however short that may be. Really helpful to not feel so alone on our journeys and that others are in a similar boat to ourselves.”



Alison, Manchester

“This is genuinely one of the most useful courses I have been on. The content is relevant and meaningful. I have been able to apply what I have learnt in my life and to help my children. It has been a safe space to celebrate the positives and to talk about strategies for the everyday challenges.”

Vicky, Exmouth.





“The CLANGERS are now stuck in my head and in moments of stress I stop and think about how I can help myself.”

Sarah, Manchester

“An amazing programme, that really raises your awareness of the importance of self-care as parents”

Jon, Devon





“It gave me a chance to relocate myself
and remember what makes me happy,
outside of the things I do for my children
and others”

Nikki, Enfield

This course has literally changed my life-my outlook, my understanding and my response to difficult situations.
Thank you so much!

Fiona, Devon





“I'm now more active, doing more for myself , accessing support, learnt tools which I have used to help my child, changed eating habits for my family”

Gurdeep, Harrow



Healthy

PARENT CARERS

Improving parent carers' health
and wellbeing

<https://healthyparentcarers.org>

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Feedback from Parent carers in Shropshire



A 12 week online programme, designed to improve parent carers' health and wellbeing by promoting empowerment, confidence, and resilience.



I have really enjoyed getting to know everyone and it has been a good mix of people. I think you both provide an atmosphere in which it is easy to speak and be heard. It has been great to join people who understand the stresses and strains of being a parent carer with a safe space to vent sometimes and also sympathy and empathy as well as problem-solving. The topics covered are very relevant to a holistic approach to being a more healthy parent carer, the pace of the meetings are good. There is structure and fun activities which is very important but also flexibility with how the sessions are delivered and tailored to the people on the course. I have found it very useful to have time to concentrate on myself in this way.

I have found this course to be run in both a professional and caring way. The balance is just right, giving everyone a chance to share which is extremely empowering as an SEN parent who often feels invisible. The areas covered on the course really highlight things that are very beneficial and useful. The targets we set are always encouraged and supported. I will miss the weekly interaction with the other parents and Abi and Denise very much. It has really highlighted to me how I need to get stuck in and get more involved with activities for both my children's sake and my own. I have been given support with this and where to find things for us to join which again is another plus point of the course.

The Healthy Parent Carer Programme has been invaluable to me. The support, encouragement and advice I have received from both leaders and other parents has made a huge difference to my health and well-being. I no longer feel quite so helpless and alone, and I am confident I can utilise the skills I have learnt, even when the course has finished.