

Factsheet 5: Acknowledging and affirming carer strengths



When PHSB is disclosed or discovered, there can be a sudden influx of professionals in a family's life. The situation can feel overwhelming, and carers may struggle to see how they can contribute to the child or young person's recovery. Acknowledging a carer's strengths helps counter these feelings by empowering them with the knowledge that they are an important part of the child or young person's journey, and that their actions can make a difference.¹

Conversation tip	Examples in practice
Observe and affirm the carer's strengths.	<i>You are so good at noticing small changes in Bailey's behaviour before things escalate. This is such an important skill in keeping him safe. I've noticed how wonderful you are at connecting with Alex when he is upset. It's lovely to see how safe he feels with you.</i>
Acknowledge the efforts they have made and their strengths while also explaining that there are some areas where practitioner support is needed.	<i>You've already done so well at making changes to keep Bailey safe. I think that together with [practitioner] you're going to be able to come up with a really solid plan to keep everyone safe. You should feel proud that you've formed such a close and trusting connection with Bailey and that he feels safe telling you what happened. Talking with a psychologist will help Bailey work on some strategies for stopping the behaviour and take some of the weight of 'fixing things' off your shoulders.</i>

Looking after yourself

Working with children, young people and carers to address PHSB can be confronting.² This work may also lead to emotional reactions that can impact your well-being or the support you provide to families. This means it is important to engage in self-care, be mindful of your responses, and engage in reflective practice with the support of your team, line manager and clinical supervisor.³ For further information and self-care suggestions see the Looking After Yourself Professional Factsheet from the NSW Government, Department of Communities and Justice.

¹ Evertz, J. & Miller, R. (2012)

² Mitchell, et al. (2020)

³ Mitchell, et al. (2020); NSW Government, Department of Communities and Justice. (2010)