



Survival, Support and Small Wins
**YOUR FIRST YEAR IN CARE:
WHAT I WISH I'D KNOWN**

Welcome

Your first year in care will **CHANGE YOU.**

You'll learn more than any course could teach. You'll grow in ways that surprise you. And yes — some days, you'll feel like quitting. Not because you don't care, but because you care so much.

This guide is for every new carer, support worker, or care assistant who's just starting out — or who's a few months in and wondering, **“Am I doing this right?”**

Let me tell you now: ***you're doing better than you think.***

This isn't a textbook. It's a conversation. A little encouragement. A few truths I wish someone had told me during my first year.

**And most importantly, it's a place to reflect —
and remind yourself that you are not alone.**



Honest Tips from Carers, for Carers

Let's start with some truths that don't get said enough:



You won't feel confident right away. That's normal.

It takes time to find your rhythm. Confidence isn't something you wait for — it's something that grows through experience.



You will mess up. That doesn't mean you're not good at your job.

Mistakes happen. What matters is how you respond, learn, and grow. Seek feedback — don't fear it.



You might cry in the car. That doesn't mean you're not strong.

Caring is emotional. It's okay to feel things deeply — that's what makes you brilliant.



Not everyone will "get it." That's okay too.

Friends or family might not understand what your job involves. Don't let that make you doubt your purpose.



You will change lives — even if you don't realise it yet.

A small act of kindness, a warm cup of tea, a listening ear... these things matter. You matter.



Managing Shift Guilt, Emotional Overload & Home Life

Let's talk about emotional whiplash. One moment you're making someone laugh, the next you're reporting a safeguarding concern. And then you go home, expected to "switch off."

Here's how to cope when your heart feels full (or heavy):



Name what you're feeling

Tired? Upset? Proud? Guilty? Naming your emotion helps you understand and release it.



Talk to someone who gets it

Other carers understand your emotional highs and lows. That's why we built **Life in Care** — to share, support, and remind each other we're not alone.

Watch the Life in Care playlist for real stories and emotional survival tips:

[Watch the playlist here](#)



Don't carry work home

Easier said than done, I know. But create rituals — change clothes, shower, journal, or take a walk — to help your body and mind let go.



Protect your rest

One bad night's sleep can change how you process a tough shift. Prioritise winding down, even if that means saying no to plans.



Log your wins (especially the quiet ones)

Whether it's calming a client, handling a tricky family, or completing your documentation perfectly — *write it down*. It counts.



Celebrate the Little Victories

Not every shift is life-changing. But every shift has something worth celebrating. Start looking for:

- ♥ A smile that wasn't there yesterday
- ♥ A client remembering your name
- ♥ A moment where you stayed calm under pressure
- ♥ A thank-you from a colleague
- ♥ A record you completed better than last time

Care is built on tiny victories. **Collect them.**

Daily Journal: "My 5-Minute Decompress"



One thing I did well today:



A moment that made me feel something (good or bad):



What I need tonight: (Rest? Reassurance? Company?)



One thing I'd do differently next time:



A reminder to myself:



Need a Reminder to **Keep Going?**



Download and Print Your Diary

Stick it in your locker, bag, or drawer.

Refer to it on tough days.

Share it with a teammate who's having a wobble.

Come back to your "why."

[Download Your Diary](#)



Explore Life in Care – The Playlist

Want real talk from real carers?

Our **Life in Care YouTube series** is packed with encouragement, laughter, honesty, and support.

[Watch the Life in Care series](#)

FINAL WORDS

from Jill

If this is your first year in care — **I see you.**

I know the courage it takes to keep showing up, even when it's hard.

You're doing something important. You're part of something powerful.

And yes — you're learning, growing, and becoming more resilient every single day.

So, take a breath. Celebrate a small win. And know this:

You are needed. You are appreciated. You are not alone.

With pride and belief in you,

Jill Hudson
Your Big Sister



Email: hello@bigsistercare.com
Telephone: 0191 329 3139
Website: www.bigsistercare.com