



The
Children's
Society

**DO YOU HAVE A FAMILY
MEMBER WITH A DISABILITY
OR ILLNESS?**

Supporting young people

If you have a family member with a disability or illness this booklet will help support you, it's important that you look after yourself too.

You will find links to helpful advice as well as questions to think about before meeting with your doctor. There's lots more at youngcarer.com

What is disability?



A disability or illness is something that makes a difference to your everyday life. This might be physical or mental. What this means, is that a disabled person might need to use a wheelchair (physical) or it could mean that their brain might work in a different way to other people (mental). This isn't a bad thing; it just shows how different we all are.

A disability might include:

- * Physical disabilities
- * A long term health condition
- * Mental illness
- * Speech, language and communication problems
- * Difficulty seeing and hearing
- * Alcohol or substance misuse problems.

Having a family member with a disability can be tough at times but also really rewarding. There are many people like you so it's important to remember you are not alone.

This leaflet aims to give you some information and advice to help and support you. It's important to look after yourself too.

* It is physically/mentally exhausting and [doctors] can offer advice on how to manage it. *

How can having a family member with a disability affect you?



Having a parent, grandparent or sibling with a disability or illness can make a difference to the way you feel and talk about things. You might have extra worries. You're not alone though and some of the following sentences might describe the things you are experiencing:

- * Worrying about your family.
- * Struggling with your own physical and emotional health.
- * Problems at school such as finishing homework or getting to class on time.
- * Lack of time to see your friends or take part in activities or sports.
- * Extra responsibilities at home.
- * Feeling embarrassed.
- * Hearing unkind comments from others about your family.
- * Feeling different to other people your age.
- * Disturbed sleep.
- * Feeling proud of your family and your role with them.
- * Having a close relationship with your family.

It is normal to have a mixture of feelings, some negative and some positive.

You can talk to a trusted adult or friend who might be able to help.

* I don't want to be different, I am worried they will tease me again about Dad and the way he is...so I just keep quiet.*

Who are young carers?

A young carer is a young person who helps look after someone at home, in 2011 it was estimated that there are 166,000 young carers in England.

Some young people that have a disabled or ill family member might be taking on extra jobs at home, this may include:

- * helping with jobs around the house;
- * giving personal care such as washing, dressing and assisting with toilet requirements;
- * giving medication, changing dressings or other medical help;
- * providing emotional support by chatting and listening to problems;
- * translating, if English is not your first language;
- * help with communication if someone at home uses sign language or has trouble speaking;
- * helping to care for younger brothers and sisters.

If you are a young carer there is support available, find out if there is a group near you at youngcarer.com

Remember - if a caring role is impacting on your physical and emotional health, education or leisure time, you should talk to someone about getting support. Your School Nurse, Practice Nurse or GP is a good place to start.



Talking to General Practice staff (doctors and nurses)



Your doctor or nurse may or may not be the same health professional that the person you are caring for sees, but you can still ask them for support for your physical and emotional well-being, and the impacts of your caring role.

This page is so you can think about the things you might want to discuss with your doctor or nurse, you can write down some questions and have space to write some notes when you meet with them.

Questions you might want to ask:

Can you give me further information about my family members' disability or illness?

Remember: The doctor/nurse has to respect the family member's privacy (that you care for) - health professionals can only share information about someone's health with their permission.

Where can I get help for my emotional and mental health?

Talk to them about your health and well-being, they are there for you too.

How can my family get some more support?

Your family might be entitled to an assessment through your local authority under the Children and Families Act 2015

What should I do in an emergency?

Remember: In a medical emergency you should always call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

Write down any other questions you have for your doctors:

Remember: If you have lots of questions and concerns to discuss with your doctor or nurse you may want to ask for a double appointment.

Supporting you



Whether or not you are a young carer you and your family deserve help and support.

Here are a few tips:

- * Find someone you trust to share your thoughts and feelings with. Try not to keep them to yourself. Perhaps you could speak to a school counsellor or nurse.
- * Try to explain to teachers why you may not have finished your homework or why you may be late. Your parents may be able to help you do this.
- * Try to find some time for yourself and do something you enjoy.
- * You could join a Young Carers Group. Go to www.youngcarer.com for more information.
- * Use your experience positively.
- * Ask your local authority for a young carers assessment to see what other support your family can get.

**We want
PEOPLE
to be
MORE AWARE!!**

Top 5 Tips for emotional well-being - by young carers

1. CONNECT:

Spend some quality time with other people including your friends and family.

2. BE ACTIVE:

Play a team game or do something active with a friend,

OR

Spend some 'me time' doing something you enjoy outdoors.

3. THINK POSITIVE:

Take stock, what good have you done today?

OR

What positives are around you?

4. KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING:

Take your time and be realistic,

AND

Look after yourself.

5. KEEP LEARNING:

Give yourself a chance to learn new skills,

AND

Feel a sense of achievement.

Getting Help



The National Young Carers Initiative, Include service website contains tools and resources for you and professionals working with you, it also includes information about local support groups you can access at www.youngcarer.com

www.matter.carers.org gives young adult carers (16-25) in the UK a space to connect, share advice and access trusted support.

www.babble.carers.org an online space where those aged under 18 who are caring for a family member or friend can chat, share their experiences and access information and advice.

www.themix.org.uk free information and support for under 25s in the UK. Get advice about sex, relationships, drugs, mental health, money, housing and jobs.

Rethink bit.ly/2jz1TWH resources and support for young carers.

NHS bit.ly/1H20jRS information about Carers Direct services from the NHS. Helpline: **0300 123 1053**

www.childline.co.uk or **0800 1111** Free helpline for children.

www.samaritans.org.uk or **08457 909 090** Free helpline.

The Children and Families Act has a section about young carers – which means that all young carers are now entitled to an assessment. This can be in response to either an appearance of need or to a request for an assessment from a young carer or their parent. The needs of everyone in the family must be considered. That includes you!

The Care Act also has sections which remind adult social care teams to think about any children in the family and whether or not they might be a young carer and to assess if the family is able to get more help. This means that as young carers, your local authority should offer an assessment for you and the person you care for to reduce your caring role. Find out more in the Know Your Rights Pack (see right).

What is an assessment?



The assessment looks at whether your caring role is right for you, including your education, training, leisure opportunities and what you want for the future. Assessments involve the thoughts, comments and wishes of the young carer and their families, ensuring you receive appropriate support.

Find out more in the Know Your Rights Pack.

Resources for you

Minds, myths and me - a fact pack for young people who live with someone with a mental illness glosyoungcarers.org.uk

Parents, pints and pills - a fact pack for young people who live with a parent with substance misuse issues glosyoungcarers.org.uk

www.riprap.org.uk - a national website aimed at 12–16 year olds to help a young person cope when a parent has cancer.

www.macmillan.org.uk - has an interactive site for children and young people to find out more about cancer and share their experiences with others in their situation.

www.hopeagain.org.uk - a website designed for young people by young people, offering support to people after the death of someone close.

Know Your Rights pack for young carers in England: This pack aims to make you aware of your rights – your human rights, your legal rights, and your rights to access things like benefits, support and advice

www.youngcarer.com/kyr

Looking after myself: a short, simple booklet that includes activities to complete with an adult to help reflect on your caring role

www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/yp_wellness_plan.pdf

The Children's Society is a national charity supporting children and young people through services in local communities. When children and young people face a crisis we are with them every step of the way.

We are here for you to talk to and we will listen without judging. We will get to the heart of your problem and provide you with the help and support you need.

The Children's Society's Include service is home to the national Young Carers Initiative supporting children and young people who care for parents or siblings who suffer from chronic illness or disability. We campaign for change with the government, working hand in hand with young carers to make sure their voices are heard, campaigning for changes to laws and policies to make their lives better.

More information and a range of information materials and resources visit youngcarer.com or call 01962 711 511.

The young carers lead for [REDACTED] surgery is

[REDACTED]

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