



Are you a Young Carer?



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Many young carers don't realise they are a 'carer'.

You may have started caring when you were much younger. It's just what you've got used to. Or perhaps something happened and you started helping to look after a friend or family member regularly, after they had an accident or became sick and need ongoing care

Who Me?

Am I a young carer?

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Are you under 25?

YES

Do you regularly help to look after someone else.

YES

Does the person you are looking after have

A health condition

YES

Are they disabled?

YES

A mental health condition

YES

A drug or alcohol problem

YES

Are you supporting an older person?

YES

.....No?.....

.....No?.....

.....No?.....

.....No?.....

Read on to find out more about young carers,

how to get help, and tips for looking after yourself.



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"I love talking to or messaging other carers like me. There are a lot of young carers who understand each other and give each other tips."

Dylan, 14

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"I do all kinds of stuff. There isn't anyone else helping so it ends up being me." TAYLOR, 17

Everyone's situation is different.

Sometimes others might help do these jobs too, or a young carer might do most of them by themselves.

What do Young Carers do?

A young carer might help with things like...

1 household chores

tidying up, washing, cleaning, cooking

2 keeping the house running

shopping, managing money, making sure bills get paid

3 everyday care

helping a family member or friend with dressing, taking medicines, meals, or moving around

4 keeping your friend or family member safe

checking they're doing okay

5 making appointments

perhaps going with your family member or friend

6 emotional support

such as encouraging your family member or friend, keeping them company, or talking about their challenges and worries

7 interpreting or translating

for your family member or friend if English is their second language

8 child care

looking after younger brothers and sisters

What's it like to be a young carer?

Young carers say that helping someone in your family or whānau has good and bad points. You want to help and make a difference, but that might mean you have less free time or more stress than their friends. Being a carer can be a big job.

THE GOOD THINGS

- As a young carer, you want to help a family member or friend who needs support and who is important to you.
- You can feel proud of the contribution you make to that person's life, and to your family's life.
- You may have a close relationship with the person you're caring for and can share some special times together.
- You're likely to have some skills and experience that most young people don't have, which may help you in the future.
- Young carers are often more mature than others their age.

"We ended up laughing so much together when he was in hospital. Even though he was really sick, we had the best times together. We were in this kind of bubble together, away from the usual world. It was pretty special."

..... Kat, 23



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THE TOUGH STUFF

- **You can feel left out and held back.** Responsibilities can stop you getting to do what others do - like hanging out with friends, getting homework done on time, being in a sports team, or having a part-time job.
- **It can feel lonely at times.** Often others don't understand why you can't do things after school or at weekends.
- **Daily life can get extra stressful.** If your friend or family member's condition is bad, it can also get scary at times.
- **Relationships can get tense in stressful times.** With the family member or friend you are helping, or with others in the family.
- **It can be difficult financially for the family.** This adds stress.
- **You may struggle at school, training, or work, if you are often tired.** You might also be worried about the person you're helping, and how to manage things. You may have to take time away to deal with things that happen, like appointments or health emergencies.
- **You might feel worried or anxious.** You may feel overwhelmed at times and you may develop depression. You might also feel angry or frustrated, even though you do want to help.
- **It can be hard deciding when to leave home.** This might not feel like an option for you if the person you help depends on you.



"My sister's ups and downs become ours too. It can be a rollercoaster ride." MIA, 16

Look after yourself

You matter too. If you don't look after yourself you won't be in the right space to help someone else.

1 Talk to someone you trust

Choose a good friend, another young carer, a counsellor, a doctor, or another member of your family or whānau. If you share your feelings, others can help and support you more.

2 Ask for help

You do NOT have to do everything on your own. It's okay to ask others for support and to share the care. (See page 9 & 12)

3 Look after your own body

Eat properly - get enough sleep - keep active. Exercise will help you deal with stress.

4 Take a break, if you can

Make times to relax, do what you enjoy and hang out with friends.

5 Take some slow, deep breaths

It's a fast way to release stress and feel better.

6 Learn

Talk to the person you help if possible, and ask questions at medical appointments. Knowing more will help you understand what is happening and how best to help. (See page 10.)

7 Connect with others who 'get it'

Join Young Carers NZ on Facebook (see page 13), phone 0800 777 797, or email centre@carers.net.nz If you meet other young carers, ask for their email or phone details. Maybe you can support each other.

8 Get into nature

Spending time in the garden, the park, or by the sea can be relaxing.

9 Have an emergency plan

Know what to do if there is an emergency. If you are very worried while caring, call 111. Talk to the person you help or others in your family about how to get help for the person if there is an emergency. (See page 10)

Finding help



Getting support to deal with issues or find useful information can make all the difference. Keep asking until you get the help you need.

You could use a helpline for support:

Youthline 0800 376 633, free text 234 or email talk@youthline.co.nz

What's Up 0800 942 8787 (for 5–18 year olds; 1 pm to 11 pm)

Kidsline 0800 54 37 54 (0800 kidsline) aimed at children up to 14 years of age; 4pm to 6pm weekdays

Lifeline 24hr counselling
0800 543 354

Samaritans 0800 726 666
or 04 473 9739

The Low Down youth depression support, free text 5626 or email team@thelowdown.co.nz and see www.thelowdown.co.nz

Depression Helpline 0800 111 757 or see www.depression.org.nz

Netsafe internet bullying support
0508 638 723

Shine confidential domestic abuse helpline 0508 744 633

Got questions about a health condition, a disability, an alcohol or drug addiction or mental health condition?

Family Services 211 Helpline
0800 211 211 for help finding (and direct transfer to) community based health and social support services in your area. Or search www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory

Alcohol and Drug Helpline
0800 787 797
www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz

Supporting Families In Mental Illness 0800 732 825 (for families and whānau supporting a loved one who has a mental illness)

Al-anon/Alateen support for the families of heavy drinkers
0508 425 266 www.al-anon.org.nz

Healthline 24 hour 0800 611 116

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Making an Emergency Plan

Contact Carers NZ for some help and useful tools to help you do this. Phone 0800 777 797, email centre@carers.net.nz or see www.carers.net.nz. Also check out your local council's website for emergency planning information.



"Beef and I have a very close bond and we really 'get' each other. I think that's been developed from our caring relationship and helping each other out so much. I wouldn't take it back for the world."

Lauren, 27

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YOU'RE NOT ALONE

1,000s

OF NZers
AGED **15** TO **25***

ARE YOUNG CARERS — LIKE YOU

** We don't know how many children in New Zealand under the age of 15 are young carers. We are working with researchers to find out!*



*we're here to
support you*

Young Carers NZ is a national programme of the charity Carers NZ. We know that caring for someone else can take up lots of time, effort and energy. That's because we're carers ourselves.

Many of our photos of young carers were taken by Radio NZ. Thanks for letting us use them!

HOW WE CAN HELP...

- **Be part of a community.** There are lots of other young carers out there – you're not alone.
- **Connect with other young carers.** Get to know other young carers who 'get it'.
- **Get information** to help you as a carer.
- Learn about **ways get some extra help.**
- **Get tips** about ways to look after yourself and the person you help.
- **Find websites and social media** that support young carers around the world.

Young Carers NZ is led by an advisory group of young carers. They are sharing their experiences with government and Carers NZ to help all young carers.



connect with us

We can offer support and help you connect with other young carers.



FACEBOOK

[Search YoungCarersNZ](#)



FREE PHONE

[0800 777 797](tel:0800777797)



EMAIL US

centre@carers.net.nz



WEBSITE

www.carers.net.nz

Tell us about young caring!

Please tell us about the jobs you do to help your family member or friend with a health condition, elderly, disabled, mentally unwell or dealing with a drug or alcohol problem.

Having this information will help us support New Zealand's young carers better. Your information will be kept private so no one else will see it.

Find the survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8CQNG8T>

If you'd like to be sent a copy of the survey to fill in, phone 0800 777 797 or email centre@carers.net.nz

Thanks for helping us!



FACEBOOK

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