

## **Secondary School Ideas For Discussing Young Carers**

### **Objectives:**

- Explain what a Young Carer is.
- Know some of the things Young Carers might do.
- To learn about what Young Carers' lives can be like.
- Know some details about Young Carers such as the average age of a Young Carer.
- Can including learning about some illnesses and disabilities they weren't sure about before.
- Reduce bullying if the children have a better understanding.

### **Introduction:**

If the school has had an assembly start by reminding about the assembly and explain what a Young Carer is, if not then discuss this with them. Have the definition on an A3 piece of card or the board to display during the lesson. Go through some basic ground rules as talking about sensitive things. (May be YCs in class, don't be afraid to ask questions, respect, think about how others might be feeling)

### **A young carer is;**

Anyone under the age of 18 whose life is in some way affected because of a caring or support role for a family member who has a long-term illness, mental health issue, a disability, or who substance dependency.

### **Examples**

It may be useful to give examples of young carers (some listed below), this could be facilitated as a discussion about impacts these various caring roles may have.

Jess aged 15 gets both her younger sisters ready and takes them to and from school every morning so that her dad can her disabled mother up and ready for the day and then go to work.

Yusef aged 10 checks his dad has taken his medication every morning, he pays close attention to his mood and sometimes texts or calls him through the day whilst at school as dad suffers with depression and anxiety.

Tom is 12 he has an autistic brother whose behaviour can often be unpredictable and he can lash out during mood swings, because of this Toms family do not go out very often. He is very close to his brother and is often the only one who can calm him down. Tom is not allowed friends round in case his brother struggles with the change in routine.

Sam is 17, his mum has a drug addiction, he makes sure the rent and bills get paid and makes sure his mum eats properly, he has had to call an ambulance for mum before when she had overdosed.

## **Quiz**

- 1. On average, 1 in 5 children in a secondary school may be a young carer.**(True)
- 2. Most people with a disability are born with it.**  
(False: only 17% of people with a disability are born with it. People become disabled through accidents, disease or as they get older.)
- 3. Young Carers only care for a parent.**  
(False: Young Carers can care for any family member that they live with – Mum, Dad, brother, sister, Grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc.)
- 4. You can always tell if someone is disabled just by looking at them.**  
(False: some disabilities are not visible)
- 5. 6 million people in the UK suffer from mental illness.**  
(True: mental illnesses are very common.)

## **Activity – Think about life for a young carer**

Small groups each given a young person, can either draw the young person and annotate the answers around the drawing or discuss and bullet point answers on flip chart.

- For your young carer think about what things they might have to do for the family member they care for (think about the emotional support and physical support they may provide)
- How might their caring responsibility impact on their day?
- How would their social life be affected?
- What might stop them talking to a friend or a trusted adult about their caring?

Marlon is five, he lives alone with his mum who has heart problems and low blood pressure.

Emma is 13 and cares for her mum who has sarcoidosis (a disease that affects the immune system) and her younger brother who has autism.

Jake is ten years old and lives at home with his dad who has alcohol issues.

Ahmed is twelve and cares for his mum who has diabetes.

Stacey is nine she cares for her mum who has bi-polar disorder.

### **Discussion point**

If a friend spoke to you about being a young carer and finding life difficult, what could you say to them or do to support them?

Ideas/suggestions.

- Talk to a teacher/professional
- Listen to them
- Understand that at times it might be difficult to see you, but they still want to be your friend
- Be flexible in activities you do to give them the best chance of attending
- Be normal with them – they are still your friend, a young person and still have all the same fears, worries, thoughts and hobbies that you may do.

### **Activity - Map out a day**

In small groups using a sheet with the below times marked out ask them to discuss or write out what they might do at each time on an average weekday.

***Between 6-8 am***

***Between 8-10am***

***Between 10am -12pm***

***Between 12pm – 2pm***

***Between 2pm-4pm***

***Between 4pm- 6pm***

***Between 6pm- 8pm***

***Between 8pm -10 pm***

***Between 10pm - midnight***

Then provide the below activities on pieces of paper in an envelope to each group and ask them to use these to map out when in the day young carers might do these activities. Note they may have to prioritise some activities over others. Also discuss upon completion of this activity that depending on what happens with the person they care for it could impact on their day and what they can/can't do. Also an opportunity to discuss how difficult it might be to concentrate fully at school whilst having these things on your mind.

**Go to school**

**Wake up younger sister and make sure she gets ready for school**

**Make breakfast and lunch for everyone whilst your dad helps mum get washed and dressed**

**Walk younger sister to school**

**Call mum to check she's ok**

**Text mum**

**Do homework**

**Hang out with friends**

**Pick sister up**

**Talk to mum and check she's ok**

**Watch tv**

**Give mum her medication**

**Cook dinner and eat with your mum and sister, save some for your dad as he is at work**

**Put your sister to bed**

**Catch up with dad when he gets in from work**

**Go to bed**

### **What have you learnt about Young Carers?**

Can do this via discussion or writing on a post it and sticking it on the board.

Remind the Young People who the Young Carers Lead in school is and that they can talk to them or other teachers if they have any questions or if they think they might be a Young Carer.

### **Useful Websites/Resources**

<https://www.warwickshireyoungcarers.org.uk/default.aspx>

<https://carers.org/>

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/helping-children/young-carers>

<https://youtu.be/eou1ury5sxxw>