

“Young carers can be subject to a range of stresses as they grow up due to the caring role, the nature of their family life, social exclusion and stigma, but they are one of the most over-looked groups in society. It is our duty to tackle these issues and to protect their mental and physical health and help them to grow up to be happy and healthy adults. This project is a vital step to help us do this and to prevent the cycle of illness that can persist through generations.”

Dr Andrew McCulloch

Chief Executive, Mental Health Foundation

“Many of us know a family affected by mental illness, and many more families are affected but keep it a secret. When children become young carers, who look after a family member with a mental health problem, they need support to safeguard their own mental health and wellbeing. This project is a vital opportunity to understand how to best support these children and young people.”

Alex Fox

Director of Policy,
The Princess Royal Trust for Carers



MyCare

“I knew that when he didn’t take his medication he got worse and wouldn’t talk to anyone or come out of his bedroom, so I would remind him everyday to have some breakfast and take his tablet, sometimes he would argue with me, but I just wanted him to get better. Dad would sometimes cry a lot and say he was a bad Dad, but I always told him I loved him and he was the best Dad in the world, and that’s how I feel!”

Young carer

MyCare is a collaboration between the Mental Health Foundation, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (no.2350846) and a registered charity (no. 801130) whose registered office is at Sea Containers House, 20 Upper Ground, London SE1 9QB, and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (no. 3681548) and a registered charity (no. 1073592) who is registered at Unit 14, Bourne Court, Southend Road, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 8HD

MyCare

Young Carers’ resilience, coping strategies and cultural differences in caring for parents with a mental illness



Information for professionals about MyCare and how to get involved



Mental Health Foundation

MyCare

Young Carers' resilience, coping strategies and cultural differences in caring for parents with a mental illness

MyCare is a research project from the Mental Health Foundation and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers which seeks to improve the mental health of children of parents with severe and enduring mental illness.

MyCare focuses on mental health and emotional well-being of 10-21 year olds in the context of:

- Resilience; (The capacity to cope and to deal more effectively with stress and pressure, to deal with everyday challenges, to bounce back from disappointments, adversity and trauma to develop clear and realistic goals to solve problems)
- Long-term coping strategies;
- Young people's perception of the role of caring and its interplay with culture, resilience and coping strategies.

This innovative project will seek to improve current service provision and make recommendations for future policy and practice development.



Why are we doing this?

In the 2001 census over 50,000 young carers were identified to be caring for a parent with mental illness, of which 17,000 were caring for parent with severe and enduring mental illness. Research suggests that between 25 – 50% of these children and young people will experience mental health problems during their childhood or adulthood.

MyCare will work with voluntary and statutory services in England; Scotland and Wales to hear the voice of professionals and young carers. The project aims to:

- Explore culture, age and gender and their affects on resilience, long term coping strategies and perceptions on the role of caring.
- Take a holistic and person-centred approach to the investigation by considering individuals' cultural background and needs.
- Provide a preventative approach for young carers by promoting their resilience and coping strategies.
- Offer immediate and long term benefits for young carers, their parents, the commissioners of services and staff.
- Raise the profile of young carers with policymakers and other key decision makers.

MyCare builds on the Mental Health Foundation's extensive programme of work to improve the mental health of children and young people. This includes the influential Bright Futures inquiry into children and young people's mental health (1999), and the Listen Up! Project (2005-2007) which promoted innovative provision of crisis services for young people.

Find out more at www.mentalhealth.org.uk

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers is the largest provider of comprehensive carers support services in the UK, for both adult and young carers.

The Trust is also involved in research, development and consultation; influencing national, regional and local policy; partnering with other national organisations and giving grants to improve carers' lives.

For more information visit www.carers.org and www.youngcarers.net.

How can I get involved?

1) We will be holding National Events which you can attend. From these you will be able to:

- Learn more about the project including taking part in focus groups
- Benefit from presentations and workshops offered by experts in the area of Young Carers
- Network with other key stakeholders in this area
- Increase your quota of CPD hours

2) Take part in our online survey to voice your views on young carers

For more information on both the events and the survey go to www.mentalhealth.org.uk/mycare

Or for more information on the **MyCare** project please contact Emma Beecham or Kim Penketh at mycare@mhf.org.uk and we will contact you soon.

We look forward to hearing from you.