

It's Okay to Seek Help

A 45-minute session for primary school students aged 8-12 years.



Objectives

- Breaking down the stigma towards mental health challenges and accessing services.
- Acknowledging that young carers are at higher risk of compassion fatigue and burn out and building confidence to seek help early.
- Informing young people about what supports are available and who they can talk to assist with early intervention.

Resources

- **Activity 3 Worksheet:**
Hand Template
- Pens and texta's.
- 3 large pieces of coloured paper.

Session Times

Session Activity

Resources

5 minutes

Activity 1 - Why We Should Ask for Help Sometimes

Step 1: Explain that young carers are so used to giving and caring for the person they are caring for. While caring does allow someone to gain skills, strengths and empathy beyond their years, it sometimes can make someone feel tired, overwhelmed and burnt out.

When we experience repetitive burnout, this can also lead to 'compassion fatigue'. Compassion fatigue is a term which means that over time we gradually lose empathy or compassion from constantly helping others (often related to trauma).

This can overall impact on your own mental and emotional wellbeing, affect your schooling and/or work and can also negatively impact on your friend and family relationships.

Session Times	Session Activity	Resources
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20 minutes

Activity 2 - When We Need Help and Who and Where to Go

Step 1: Instructor gets 3 large pieces of coloured paper and writes the following questions - (1 question on each piece of paper).

Question 1 - What are signs that someone may be feeling overwhelmed and could feel better after seeking outside support?

Question 2 - How could someone I ask for help?

Question 3 - Who can someone our age ask for help?

Step 2: Get the conversation going with question one. Consider how being a young carer can impact on mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. Discuss examples to prompt students: This can include thoughts, feeling and emotions for instance; feeling lonely, sad, overwhelmed, exhausted, burnt out, clouded head. Also consider the physical impacts for instance, feeling anxious and having butterflies in the tummy, wanting to vomit and wanting to sleep a lot. Also, discuss signs in the home and school to look out for; running late to school or attendance lowering, no time to get homework done, not being interested in hobbies anymore, feeling like no one at home is listening to your needs. Note that this can be different for everyone. Signs could also include getting annoyed easily, feeling teary, headaches or tummy aches.

Step 3: Continue the conversation with question two: 'How should I ask for help?' Consider what questions, conversation pointers or language can be used when asking for help as a young carer.

Prompts for students if they need pointers:

- I feel...
- Can we please talk about...
- At a good time can we please chat?
- I am upset and need someone to talk to.

3x large pieces of paper (recommended to use the 'Post-It' Giant Pad).

Pens and texta's

20 minutes

Activity 3 - My Support People

Step 1: At question three: 'Who can I ask for help?' Discuss the idea that we should be able to count at least 5 support people on our hand. That way we can always find someone in a time of need if one person is not available to us.

Step 2a: Each young carer should spend 5 minutes writing down their support people. Explain to students that it is important that if they need help, they know who they can go to. This may look like a family member, family friend, friend, teacher, chaplain, community/sports club, hobbies, neighbour, service provider, kids' helpline (1800 55 1800) and the emergency services (000). Ask the students to be specific about the individual people and the roles in their lives. If they are struggling to find people in their family and community network, ensure them that they have people there for them within the school. Eg. The teacher, the chaplain, student services, community sports club, emergency services and kids' helpline.

Step 2b: What qualities make someone a good support person? i.e. non-judgmental, friendly, is able to help/experienced or knowledgeable

Step 3: At the end you may want to consider role playing out some scenarios with the young carers, giving them the opportunity to put into practice their skills around asking for help.

Activity 3 Worksheet:

Hand Template

Colouring pencils and texta's.

All three activities may take shorter or longer than needed. Let the conversations flow and allow the students to share.

