SIGNS TO LOOK FOR WHEN IDENTIFYING A YOUNG CAREGIVER

SOCIAL WORKERS

It can be difficult to see the signs of a young caregiver. Due to this difficulty, the Young Caregivers Association has put together this non-exhaustive list of signs to look out for as a social worker when attempting to identify young caregivers.

Obvious signs

Some of the most obvious signs of a young caregiver come from the situation and require very little outside understanding to be able to identify.

For example, should the youth have a **sibling with a disability** or a **parent with a chronic illness**, there is a good chance that they are young caregivers.

Most often in either of these two scenarios, the youth will assist in unique ways in the family dynamic; like helping mom remember to take her medication, or helping their autistic sibling reground after overstimulation. These simple acts that are above and beyond what would be considered normal for youth make them young caregivers.

Less obvious signs

Less obvious young caregivers could be present in **homes that have recently gone through a major loss**. For instance, a family where the father has passed in an accident or grandma suddenly passed to a heart attack.

Often in these situations, the youth is working through grief in a multitude of ways and is carrying more burden than average.

Another of the less obvious signs of a young caregiver would be in **homes of substance misuse**. Often in these environments, the youth has to step up and take care of things that would often not be accomplished by peers in their age group. Some examples of their duties may be things like calling for doctors' appointments, cooking their own meals, taking care of parents that are under the influence of narcotics, and so much more.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Obviously, due to the incredible variations of clients, **there is no one size fits all signs,** you must be vigilant to the differences of each client and observant of situations that might lead a youth to be classified as a young caregiver

Should there be more questions there are resources available such as at Young Caregivers Association where you can get more information and assistance should it be required.

To learn more about how you can help provide support to a young caregiver, visit **YoungCaregivers.ca/KnowledgeCentre**

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