POWERHOUSE® TOOLKIT

Partnership Conversation Guide

Lesson 2: Outreach & Awareness

PURPOSE

Use this guide to support an initial conversation with a potential community partner. You do not need to cover every question or topic. The goal is to learn about each other's work, build understanding of young caregivers, and explore where there may be a natural opportunity to work together.

Before the Conversation

Do a little preparation before you meet. Review the organization's work and think about where there may be a connection to young caregivers.

- Who does the organization support?
- How might young caregivers or their families already be connected to them?
- Is the organization primarily child/youth-serving, adult-serving, family-serving or community-based?
- What do you want them to understand about young caregivers and Powerhouse®?
- What information or resources should you have ready if they want to learn more?

KEEP IN MIND

You do not need to decide what the partnership should look like before the meeting. Go into the conversation ready to listen and explore possibilities together.

1.Start With Their Work

Rather than starting with a presentation about Powerhouse®, begin by learning more about the person and organization. This helps you understand where young caregivers may naturally connect with their work.

BUILD A HUMAN CONNECTION

Take a few minutes to build a human connection. This might be through a shared community connection, something you noticed about their work, or simply informal conversation before getting into the purpose of the meeting.

Conversation prompts:

- Can you tell me a little about your role and the work your organization does?
- Who do you primarily support?
- What are some of the needs you are seeing among the individuals and families you work with?
- Are there particular communities or populations you are trying to reach?

LISTEN FOR CONNECTIONS

As they describe their work, listen for natural connections to young caregivers, families, caregiving responsibilities, or opportunities to increase awareness.

2. Introduce Your Organization & Powerhouse®

Briefly explain who your organization is, why supporting young caregivers is important to your work, and your plans for Powerhouse®. This should provide context for the conversation rather than become a full presentation.

You may want to share:

- what your organization does;
- why young caregivers are important to your work;
- your partnership with Young Caregivers Association (YCA);
- what Powerhouse® is; and
- what you are planning to offer locally.

A short example or story can help make the experience of young caregivers more understandable when appropriate.

3. Build Understanding of Young Caregivers

Explain young caregiving through experiences and responsibilities, not only through a definition. A young caregiver may be supporting a parent, sibling, grandparent or other family member and could be:

- helping with household responsibilities;
- caring for siblings;
- providing emotional support;
- helping with medication, mobility or appointments;
- translating or communicating on behalf of a family member;
- worrying about or checking on a family member; or
- taking on additional responsibilities because someone in the family requires support.

CHILD/YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS	ADULT-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS
"Do you think some of the children or youth you work with may have responsibilities like these at home?"	"When you're supporting an adult, do you have opportunities to understand whether children or youth in the family are helping support them at home?"

4. Talk About Identification

Young caregivers may not use the term "young caregiver" to describe themselves. Rather than relying on the question "Are you a young caregiver?", encourage conversations about what life looks like at home.

Questions that can help open the conversation include:

- Who helps out at home when someone isn't feeling well or needs support?
- What kinds of responsibilities do you have at home?
- Is there someone in your family you worry about or regularly check on?
- Do your responsibilities at home ever affect school, activities, friendships or time for yourself?

USE YCA RESOURCES

Direct partners to Young Caregivers Association's identification resources for more detailed information and tools. The purpose of this conversation is to build recognition, not to cover every identification strategy.

5. Explore the Connection

KEY QUESTION

"Based on what we've talked about, where do you see a connection between young caregivers and the work your organization is already doing?"

Partnership opportunities may include:

- awareness and education;
- identification of young caregivers;
- referrals and pathways to support;
- sharing information and resources;
- connecting with young caregivers and families;
- community outreach or awareness opportunities;
- hosting or supporting programming;
- collaboration around Powerhouse®; or
- another opportunity identified through the conversation.

REMEMBER

Not every organization needs to play the same role. The right partnership is one that makes sense for the organization, the community and the young caregivers you are trying to support.

6. Discuss Referrals When Relevant

If identification and referral are a natural fit for the partnership, clearly explain your organization's referral pathway. Partners should understand:

- who can make a referral;
- whether young caregivers or families can self-refer;
- how referrals are submitted;
- what information is required;
- what happens after someone is referred;
- who the partner can contact with questions; and
- what supports may be available beyond the specific Powerhouse® offering.

7. Offer Awareness & Education

If the organization would benefit from greater understanding, discuss the option of a young caregiver awareness session. Awareness opportunities may be appropriate for staff, teams, families or other relevant groups depending on the needs of the organization and community. This may be especially useful when the person you are meeting with recognizes that young caregivers are likely present, but others connected to the organization do not yet know how to identify or support them.

Young Caregivers Association (YCA) can support young caregiver awareness presentations to help professionals, community organizations and families better understand who young caregivers are, how to recognize them, and how to connect them with support. Your organization can help identify where an awareness session would be useful, bring the right people together, and coordinate the opportunity with YCA.

8. Agree on Next Steps

Before ending the conversation, identify what happens next.

ASK

"What would make sense as a next step from here?"

A next step might be:

- sharing information or resources;
- sending referral information;
- connecting with another staff member or team;
- arranging a young caregiver awareness session;
- making an introduction to another community organization;
- exploring a program or outreach opportunity; or
- scheduling another conversation.

After the Conversation

Within a few days:

- Send a thank-you.
- Share any resources or information you committed to sending.
- Confirm agreed-upon next steps.
- Record the connection and any follow-up needed.
- Continue building the relationship rather than only reconnecting when you need referrals.

A SUCCESSFUL CONVERSATION

A successful partnership conversation does not need to result in an immediate referral or formal partnership. Increasing awareness, making a new connection, learning about community needs, or identifying a future opportunity to work together are all meaningful outcomes.

My Next Steps

Organization / Contact: _____

Connection or opportunity identified: _____

Resources or information to send: _____

Next step: _____

Follow-up date: _____