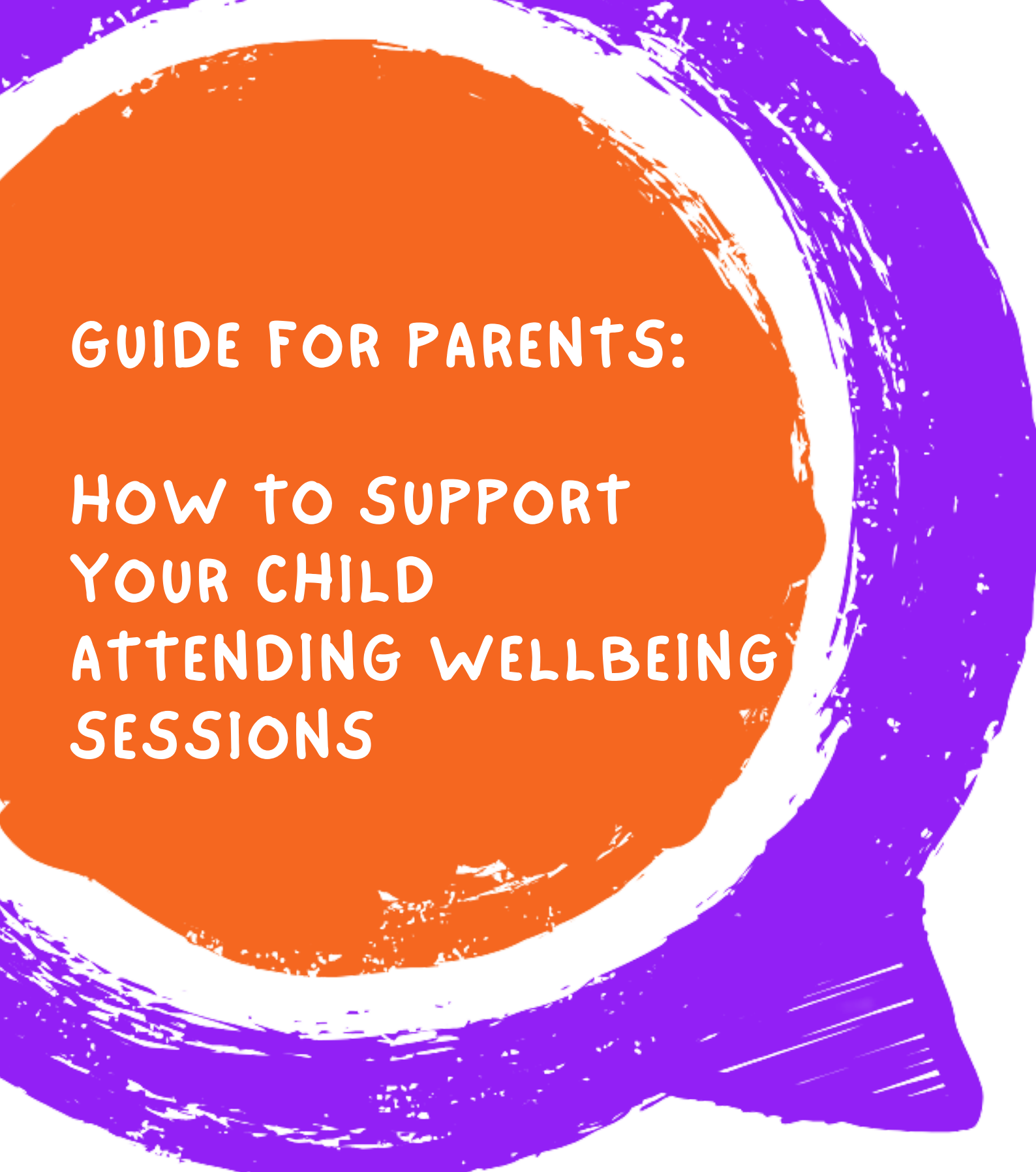




GUIDE FOR PARENTS:

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD ATTENDING WELLBEING SESSIONS

The
Henry Smith
Charity
founded in 1628



Young Carers
Bedford Borough

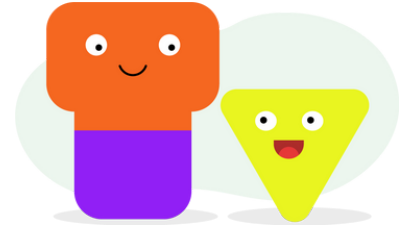
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Introduction

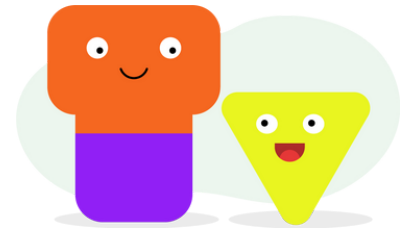


This Parental Guide is intended to offer guidance about Wellbeing Services offered as part of Carers in Bedfordshire Services. It aims to provide parents and guardians with information on how to support their children whilst they are receiving wellbeing support.

All information enclosed is intended to offer guidance about Wellbeing Services offered as part of Carers in Bedfordshire Services.

If specialist guidance is required, please speak to a team member at Carers in Bedfordshire, your GP or other mental health specialist.

Young Carer Wellbeing Support



What is wellbeing support?

Wellbeing support is a guided program to help young carers to support their wellbeing and build resilience. The aim is to help improve young carers wellbeing through building personal skills and improve their mental and emotional wellbeing.

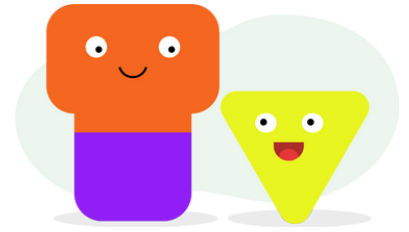
We support young carers in need of any support with their wellbeing and any mild to moderate mental health concerns including but not exclusive to: anxiety, stress, behaviour concerns, low mood and depression, interpersonal relationships and communication strategies, worries, fears and phobias.

Who is eligible for Young Carer Wellbeing support?

All young carers aged 4 to 17 years old living within Bedford Borough are eligible to Young Carer Wellbeing Support. This type of support is predominantly offered to young carers experiencing emotional distress as a result of their caring role; and those who need support around understanding the health conditions of those that they are caring for.

Please note that If your child is being supported for their mental health by another agency, Wellbeing support will not be offered. Consideration will be made as to whether your child should be added to the Young Carers Wellbeing Support waiting list.

Young Carer Wellbeing Support



How quickly will my child be seen following a Young Carers Wellbeing Referral?

You will be contacted within 2 weeks of a referral being received. The Wellbeing Practitioner will advise you if there is a waiting list and provide a rough estimate of when your child is likely to start receiving support. If wellbeing support is not considered suitable for your child, the wellbeing practitioner will notify you of this and offer alternative support which would be best suited to your child's needs.

What is the assessment process?

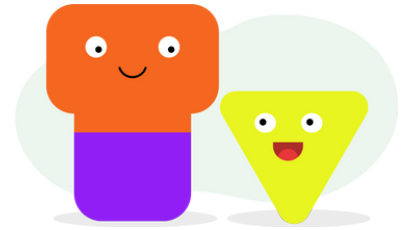
At the initial session, initial assessments will be carried out with the young carer. The assessments aim to inform the practitioner on the emotional and mental wellbeing of young carers. If the young carer is suitable for wellbeing support, then they will be offered subsequent sessions. These sessions will be formulated around the young carer's individual needs, and the impact of their caring role and responsibilities on them.

If your child is not deemed suitable for Wellbeing support, parents/guardians will be notified of the decision and directed towards more appropriate support agencies. If you feel that this decision has not considered all relevant factors, please contact the practitioner to discuss this further.

How frequent will be my child receive Wellbeing support?

Each young carer will be offered 6 wellbeing sessions, and depending on

Young Carer Wellbeing Support



level of support required, may be offered up to 10 sessions. Each session will last between 30-60mins – usually depending on age and young carer's choice. The frequency of sessions are based on professional judgement, young carer and parents' choice and individual needs.

How will they receive wellbeing support?

Wellbeing sessions are available in person at our Bedford Office, at their school, and there is also the option to receive remote support via Zoom, Microsoft Teams or telephone. Please note, we are unable to offer wellbeing support at the same time as another therapeutic intervention.

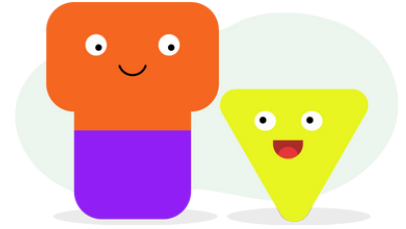
What if my child needs more than 6 sessions?

In some cases, a young person may need additional support. Consideration will be taken around how many additional sessions are required, capacity of the practitioner, and whether a referral will need to be made to an external support agency. In some cases, Carers in Bedfordshire may offer an additional 2 or 3 sessions depending on the needs of the individual, capacity of the practitioner and whether it is in the best interests of the young carer. If appropriate, it will also be discussed with the young carer and parent/guardian about referrals to other support services.

If my child needs support again in the future, can they be referred into the service?

Yes, your child can be referred into the Wellbeing service again.

Young Carer Wellbeing Support



Consideration will be made to when they last received wellbeing support, and if they are currently receiving any mental health support/intervention.

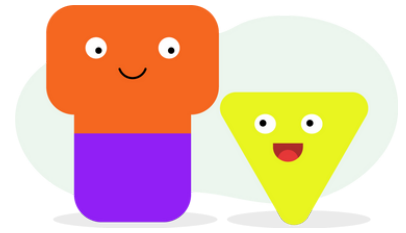
My child is nearing the age of 18 years old, but has started their wellbeing support with Young Carers?

Depending on the needs of the young carer and when their birthday is, they will be given the opportunity to engage with the Young Carer Wellbeing Service. If it is believed it would be more appropriate that they are referred to the Adult Wellbeing Service (within Carers in Bedfordshire) then this will be discussed with the parent/guardian and the young carer themselves.

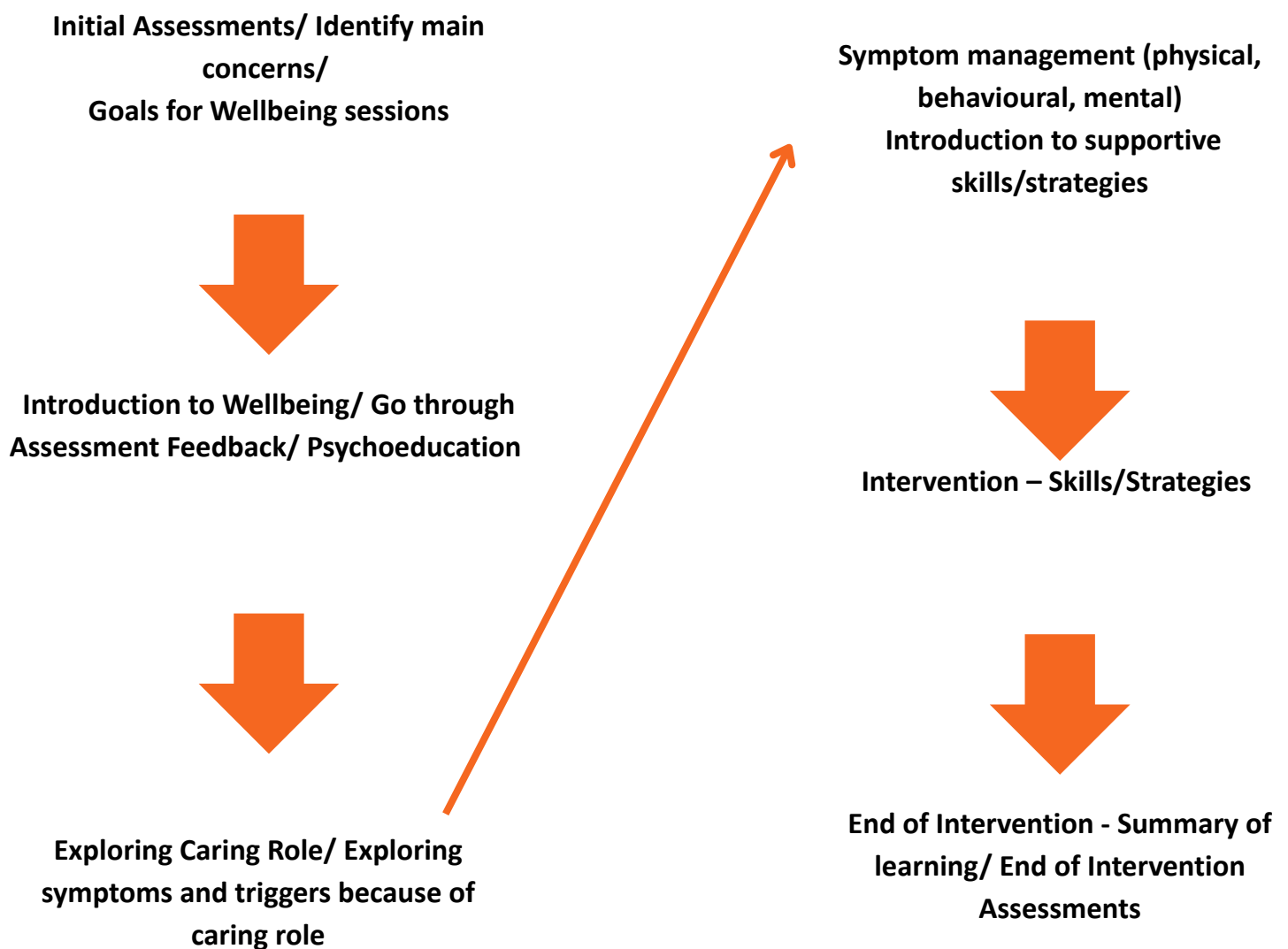
My child's wellbeing support has now finished, how can I support my child in their caring role?

It is encouraged that you maintain open lines of communication with your child. Check-in and ask questions about how they are feeling, and if they need support- this can be weekly or monthly. Ensure that your child has regular breaks from their caring responsibilities. Encourage the continued use of Wellbeing techniques learnt their sessions. Create a routine, monitor their wellbeing and promote self-care. Encourage engagement in personal interests and extracurricular activities. Offer continued praise and positive reinforcement to boost their confidence and self-esteem.

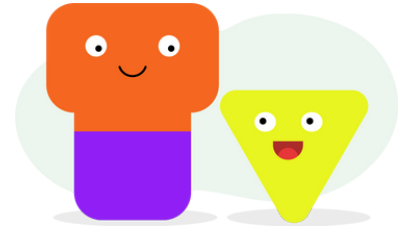
Young Carer Wellbeing Support



Please see below outline of the Wellbeing support



Understanding my child's caring role



Who is a young carer?

Young carers are children aged 4 to 17 years old who have the responsibility for looking after, supporting and/ or caring for a family member with a disability, chronic illness, mental health condition, substance dependency. This can include physical, emotional and practical assistance.

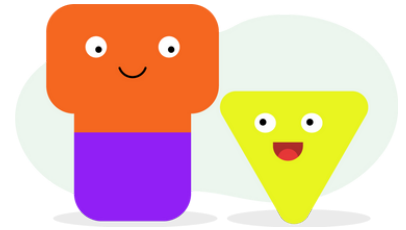
How can being a young carer impact my child?

The responsibility of being a young carer can lead to stress, anxiety, depression and social isolation. Caring duties can impact academic engagement and performance, interests in other activities, and may limit time for friends and social activities. It can also lead to physical exhaustion and other health issues. This does not mean that your child will experience all or any of these.

How do I support my child prior to them receiving wellbeing support?

- Regularly talk with your child about their feelings and experiences. Encourage them to express their feelings and concerns;
- Help establish a manageable daily routine that balances caregiving, schoolwork and leisure time;
- Inform their school/college about their caring responsibilities;
- Encourage your child to engage in activities they enjoy, and interactions with others.

Understanding my child's caring role



How do I support my child while they are receiving wellbeing support?

- Keep track of your child's wellbeing support that they are receiving;
- Encourage your child to implement the coping strategies and other techniques learnt in sessions in everyday life;
- Keep having regular discussions with your child about their wellbeing and ongoing or new challenges;
- Maintain communication with professionals providing support to your child.

How can I help my child balance their responsibilities and personal time?

Help them create a structured timetable/schedule, prioritise tasks and encourage regular breaks for leisure activities. Discuss with your child your needs and expectations of them in their caring role. Explore with your child what they feel comfortable and competent doing. Have regular check-ins with your child so they can have an opportunity to share any feelings of stress, anxiety or being overwhelmed. Develop a relaxation plan or 'recreational' plan with your child so they can have some down time and feel re-energised.

When does my child stop being a young carer?

When your child turns 18 years old, they stop being a young carer. However, as they may still have caring responsibilities, and may be considered an 'Adult Carer'. An Adult Carer can still receive Wellbeing support and have access to other forms of support if needed through Carers in Bedfordshire. For the full details on the support offered within Carers in Bedfordshire, please visit our website: <https://carersinbeds.org.uk/>

How can I better communicate with my child?

Before Wellbeing Support

Whether you are deciding to complete a referral for Wellbeing support, or your child is on the waiting list, it is important to maintain a good level of communication with your child. This could involve spending time with your child, asking them questions, and engaging them in activities that you can do together.

During Wellbeing Support

Once your child has started engaging in Wellbeing support, it can be difficult to know whether to ask our child about their sessions, and what to ask. In building strong levels of communication with your child, it is encouraged that you check-in with your child about what they are learning so that you can support them in implementing different tools or strategies into their everyday life.

You can also, check-in with their Wellbeing Practitioner for an overview of their sessions, which can be a great conversation starter and can help solidify what your child is learning in the sessions.

Please be aware, that sessions are confidential, however if there are any safeguarding concerns or any other concerns about your child's safety and wellbeing, you will be notified.



How can I better communicate with my child?

After Wellbeing Support

In the build-up to the final session, the Wellbeing practitioner will advise your child that the sessions will be ending and they will support your child over the last few sessions around this change.

Following the completion of your child's Wellbeing Sessions, they may experience some difficulty in processing the change from having a regular sessions with a practitioner, to receiving little to no support at all. If your child does experience any difficulty with the loss of routine and/or no contact with practitioner, then explore this with your child and assess how best to support them.

If it is felt that your child requires additional support, please discuss this with their Wellbeing Practitioner. Please note that this does not mean that Wellbeing sessions will resume.



How can I....

Offer Emotional Support to my child?

1. **Open Communication:** Encourage your child to talk about their feelings and experiences. Listen without judgement and validate their emotions. Provide a space for your child to share any feelings of stress, anxiety or being overwhelmed.
2. **Reassurance:** Reassure your child that it is okay to get help, and that they are not alone. Explain that everyone needs help from time to time. Remind them that taking care of their own wellbeing is important.
3. **Empathy:** Acknowledge the challenges that they face as a young carer and express your pride in their strength and resilience. Show your appreciation for their help and support to you and your family.
4. **Encouragement:** Motivate them to engage in activities that they enjoy, and that helps them to relax. Encourage them to take time for themselves to develop their personal interests.
5. **Emotional Availability:** Be emotionally available and check-in regularly with your child to ensure they feel supported and loved.

*Please note this is not an exhaustive list. It is intended to offer guidance. It should not be used as an instruction manual. If specialist guidance is required, please speak to a team member at Carers in Bedfordshire, your GP or other mental health specialist.

How can I....

Offer Educational Support to my child?

1. **Academic Assistance:** Spend time helping your child with their homework or find additional resources if needed. Consider tutoring or afterschool clubs if there are struggling with specific subjects or engaging in extracurricular activities.
2. **Communication with school:** Inform your child's school of your child's caring responsibilities. Work with your child's school to ensure that teachers understand your child's personal circumstances and ask for information on any additional support available.
3. **Time management:** Help your child develop good time management skills to balance their academic responsibilities and their caregiving duties.
4. **Learning Environment:** Create a quiet distraction-free space at home for your child to study and complete any schoolwork.
5. **Encouragement and Praise:** Celebrate your child's academic achievements, no matter how small, and encourage a positive attitude towards learning.

***Please note this is not an exhaustive list. It is intended to offer guidance. It should not be used as an instruction manual. If specialist guidance is required, please speak to a team member at Carers in Bedfordshire, your GP or other mental health specialist.**

How can I....

Offer Practical Support to my child?

1. **Daily routines:** help your child establish a manageable daily routine that includes school activities, care-giving activities and personal activities.
2. **Shared responsibilities:** Share care-giving responsibilities where possible or find other family members or community resources to ensure your child does not feel overwhelmed.
3. **Access to resources:** Provide access to resources such as books, technology, activity clubs and other tools which can assist with both their caregiving role and their own wellbeing.
4. **Respite care:** Respite care can be arranged to give your child breaks from their caregiving responsibilities. It can be an opportunity for rest.
5. **Healthy lifestyle:** Encourage a healthy lifestyle with regular meals, physical activity and sufficient sleep. If you notice a decline your child's engagement or interest in anything that they 'normally' engage in – speak to your child about your observations and ask questions to gain clarity on the changes. If you are still concerned, please speak to their Wellbeing Practitioner, GP or other mental health professional.

***Please note this is not an exhaustive list. It is intended to offer guidance. It should not be used as an instruction manual. If specialist guidance is required, please speak to a team member at Carers in Bedfordshire, your GP or other mental health specialist.**

How can I....

Advocate for my child?

- Awareness: Be aware of the wellbeing support services your child is receiving and understand the goals and methods of the service.
- Communication: Maintain open communication with the professionals providing wellbeing support for your child.
- Rights and needs: Advocate for your child's rights and ensure their needs are being met by the support services. Ask if you feel additional resources or changes are necessary.
- Collaboration: Speak with your child's teachers, healthcare professionals, support workers and other practitioners to create a comprehensive support system for your child.
- Community resources: Utilise community resources, including those offered by Carers in Bedfordshire to help advocate for your child.

***Please note this is not an exhaustive list. It is intended to offer guidance. It should not be used as an instruction manual. If specialist guidance is required, please speak to a team member at Carers in Bedfordshire, your GP or other mental health specialist.**

Frequently Asked Questions

Wellbeing Support

How can wellbeing support help/benefit a young carer?

Wellbeing support includes discussions, activities and information resources designed to improve the mental, emotional and physical health of a young carer. Wellbeing sessions aim to help young carers manage their own stress and develop coping skills with the aim of improving their overall wellbeing.

What should I do if my child is resistant to receiving support?

Talk to your child about their concerns and fears. Reassure your child about the benefits and consider involving them in the decision-making process. Support your child accessing videos or activities online relating to wellbeing support as this may decrease any worries. Contact the Wellbeing Practitioner for any resources that may be helpful or with any questions or worries that need further clarification or exploration.

How can I know if the support is working?

It is important to remember that habits take a while to develop, and change can take a while to recognise. Monitor your child's mood, stress levels and coping abilities. Regularly check-in with your child and their Wellbeing Practitioner to collaboratively assess progress.

Frequently Asked Questions

School-related questions

Do I need to inform school about my child's caring role?

This is yours and your child's choice. There are a range of benefits to sharing this information with your child's school. For example, they may have increased access to support services or Young Carers Clubs at school. Their school may be able to advise around changes in behaviours or other observations which may be related to your child's caring role and responsibilities. Wellbeing sessions are offered at school, and so the Wellbeing Practitioner will be in communication with school to arrange sessions at school with your child.

Can my child's school provide additional support?

Yes, many schools offer counselling and support services. Speak to your child's school about available resources, and where you can obtain further information. Please note that if your child is accessing wellbeing or counselling support at school then Wellbeing Support with Carers in Bedfordshire will not be offered.

Do I need to speak to school about available academic support?

At times, your child may experience school-related stress which can affect their caring role and their overall wellbeing. Talk to your child about their school experiences to understand whether their stress is predominantly school-related.

Frequently Asked Questions

It is encouraged that you also speak to your child's school to ensure appropriate support is put in place. It may also be beneficial to speak to.

Supporting my child with their responsibilities

How can I organise caring responsibilities amongst my family members, so I do not overwhelm my child?

Assess your child's needs and communicate with your family about the type of support needed. Set clear expectations, discuss resources available, delegate tasks if needed and show appreciation and acknowledgment towards any support offered.

What should I do if my child needs a break from their caregiving responsibilities?

Look into respite care options or ask for help from family, friends or community organisations.

Financial Support Guidance

Are there financial resources available for young carers?

Many different organisations and government programmes offer financial assistance for young carers. Contact Carers in Bedfordshire and ask to speak to our Grants team or visit our website for more information: <https://carersinbeds.org.uk/help-for-carers/yc-financial-support/>.

Information Resources and Other Agencies

Carers in Bedfordshire Information and Services:

Carers in Bedfordshire Website: <https://carersinbeds.org.uk/>

Wellbeing Services: <https://carersinbeds.org.uk/how-we-help/wellbeing/>

Register with Carers in Bedfordshire:
<https://carersinbeds.org.uk/register/>

Carers Grants: <https://carersinbeds.org.uk/how-we-help/carers-grants/>

External Services

Mind BLMK - <https://www.mind-blmk.org.uk/>

Bedfordshire Talking Therapies:
<https://www.elft.nhs.uk/bedfordshire-talking-therapies>





Young Carers
Bedford Borough

We are an experienced charity supporting Young
Carers across Bedford Borough.



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