

Siblings & Offspring

Having a sibling or parent with CF can be hard. It places extra demands and stressors on the child and can have a significant impact on their wellbeing, education, relationships and connections.

The impact of CF on a healthy sibling or offspring may be affected by several factors, including the severity of their family member's CF, family support and more.

While there may be positives of being a young carer, including increased compassion, health awareness and greater resilience, they may also experience a range of concerns.

Common Concerns

Guilt- Feeling they might have caused the illness through something they did wrong, about being the healthy one, or guilt about their feelings towards the person with CF.

Worry- About whether they will become ill like their sibling/parent, whether their loved one may return to hospital or become sick, concern about the family's financial situation, their parents' emotional wellbeing, or pressure to be the 'good', 'easy' or 'able' child.

Resentment- Feelings of unfairness or disappointment about the extra attention and time devoted to their sibling/parent and the limitations imposed on the family due to CF.

Sense of loss and Isolation- Feeling different from peers who have healthy



siblings/parents, sad that they cannot have the same type of relationships with their family member as their peers or isolated when they have a hospital admission.

Embarrassment- About their sibling/parent coughing, having a PICC line, being different etc.

Responsibility- Such as increased independence due to parents preoccupation with caring, or their own caregiving responsibilities, more chores etc.

Signs Your Child May Be Stressed

- Being anxious, withdrawn or angry.
- Losing interest in friends or favourite activities.
- Performing poorly in school.
- Reverting to a former level of immaturity.
- Pushing too hard to achieve or be a perfect child.
- Rebelling in negative ways (staying out too late, smoking, drinking).

How Parents Can Help

Information- Give your child information about CF at their level of understanding, increasing the detail as they age or ask questions. Let them know it is ok to ask questions.

Preparation- Help prepare your child for how to cope with difficult situations. For example, you might practice what they can say if someone says something upsetting about their sibling/parent.

Communication- Have regular conversations with your child and help them to voice any concerns or worries. They can learn that it is ok to have both positive and negative emotions.

Coping Strategies- Identify and share strategies for coping with difficult feelings and situations. Help them find activities that help them to de-stress such as physical activity or music.

Involvement- Keep your child involved in family life, such as discussions about family routines, the changes that might occur because of CF, and the role each family member plays in creating a strong, caring family. This can add to their sense of value as a contributing member of the family.

Feeling Important- Most children will understand the extra attention given to a child with CF if they are helped to feel important too. Parents, professionals or extended family/friends can all show interest in the healthy child and help them to feel special.

Engagement- Encourage your child to engage with and find support from other young carers through support organisations.

CFWA Support

CFWA support siblings and offspring through a variety of events and resources:

- [Sibling and Offspring video.](#)
- [Support events](#) including annual Sibling and Offspring Camp and Sibs' Day Out.
- Our [Social Worker](#) can provide short term counselling and strategies for coping with their feelings around CF.

Useful Resources

- [Parents & Other Carers \(CFWA\)](#)
- [Little Dreamers](#)
- [Young Carers Program \(Carers WA\)](#)
- [Young Carers Network](#)

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