

PAIN: THE UNWELCOME GUEST

PAIN IN THE FAMILY
- YOUNG ADULTS



INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS IT?

This booklet accompanies **Airing Pain** radio programmes 59 and 60 which cover the issues faced by young adults in families affected by pain – the ‘unwelcome guest’ that can dominate the life of the family if not challenged. It’s designed to help you get the most out of the programmes and think about ways you and your family can team up to put the unwelcome guest in its place.

WHO'S IT FOR?

It's for young adults affected by pain in their family and also for other family members.

HOW SHOULD I USE IT?

1. Have a quick read through first and then listen to the programmes one at a time (with other members of your family if possible).
2. After each programme come back to the booklet and think about or discuss the **talking points**. The **communication basics** could help you with this and with getting on the same wavelength more generally.

“We are excited to support these Airing Pain radio programmes featuring the experiences and advice of young adults looking after those affected by pain and those for whom they care.”

Councillor Ricky Henderson, Convener of Health, Social Care and Housing, City of Edinburgh Council

PROGRAMME 59

TALKING POINTS

HOW DOES PAIN AFFECT THE FAMILY? BOTH SIDES OF THE STORY...

Erin, who has pain, explains how her condition has affected her brother and sisters. Her sister, Donna, talks about her feelings of powerlessness and the need to keep listening and understanding.

EDUCATION, TRAVEL AND CASH - HOW CAN YOUNG CARERS BE SUPPORTED?

Terri Smith, a Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP), explains the educational, practical and financial challenges young carers face and the steps society could take to ease the load.

RIPPLE EFFECTS...

Erin: 'my mum's not got as much time to spend with my brother.'

- How has pain affected/changed your home life?
- How has it affected relationships with the person in pain and other family members?

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS...

Terri: 'my sister sometimes lacks the support just to go out and be a young person'

- Think of a time when pain in the family has prevented you from doing something you really wanted to do.
- What could make it easier for you to do the things that are most important to you?

PROGRAMME 60

TALKING POINTS

GROWING UP AND TALKING ABOUT IT

Top tips on communication and how pain in the family can disrupt the journey to independent adulthood.

THE PAIN'S NOT THE PERSON

Kim knew her dad was ill, but didn't understand his pain condition or how it affected his mood and physical health. Separating pain from the person makes it easier for everyone in the family.

TEAMING UP AGAINST PAIN...

Paul: 'gang up on pain, as opposed to ganging up on the person'

- What was life like for the family member affected by pain before they developed pain?
- Have there been times when doing things/being together as a family has helped put pain in the background?

ANGER MANAGEMENT...

Kim: 'it was difficult to understand why dad was so angry'

- When is anger at its strongest in your family?
- Have there been times when together you've been able to ward-off anger before it gets too powerful?

COMMUNICATION BASICS

EMPATHY - work on understanding the other person's experience and distinguishing their emotions from your own.

REFLECT - pause for a moment; reflect on the other person's position, rather than your own point of view.

RESPECT - treat other family members as individuals worthy of consideration. Avoid saying things you wouldn't want said to yourself.

TAKE AN INTEREST - ask the other person genuine, open-ended questions: e.g. how do you feel about. . . ?

MAKE SPACE - give short responses, to provide them with more space to talk and reflect on their experience.

AVOID BLAME - be careful to focus on the problem (e.g. pain) without placing blame on the other person.

TIME OUT - if a disagreement becomes personal, you should take a time-out and do something that helps you relax before coming back to the conversation.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Pain Concern has a forum for young adults caring for people in pain where you can share your experiences and ask our expert panel:

healthunlocked.com/painconcern-carer

Projects across the UK provide advice and social activities for young carers and support for the whole family: **www.youngcarer.com/young-carers-services**

Get info and advice and connect with other young adult carers: **matter.carers.org**

NHS info on all aspects of being a young (adult) carer, including your rights:
www.nhs.uk

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