

Being the Hero

Responsibility can be a heavy load to carry, but sometimes it's in our nature to "man up" and take things on by ourselves – our sense of responsibility towards something ties us to it, and we don't let go whatever the cost to us. It can apply to many different areas of our lives, sometimes for good, and sometimes not... so let's talk about it!

Picture this situation – A 14 year-old boy looks after his mum at home. She needs a lot of support, and their family are really kind and willing to help, but he feels like he should help the most because she's his mum and he loves her, and he doesn't want to be a trouble to the rest of the family – they've all got their own lives to get on with after all. So, he keeps on with "doing the right thing" and taking responsibility for jobs around the house, for making sure his mum's ok, making sure bills are paid, etc. Most of the time, he feels pretty good about being so helpful. People tell him what a great job he's doing, what a difference he's making. He's a hero. But he is paying a price and he is keeping quiet about it because he doesn't want to worry anyone – remember; his family have enough to worry about with his mum being so poorly...

He won't say it, but he is tired. He's starting to struggle with his school work. He doesn't see his friends much anymore. He's swimming against the tide, but he has to keep going.

Nobody has asked him to help. It's not anyone's fault that he's wearing himself down to "be the hero"... It's his sense of responsibility towards his mum, and towards his family. It's a good thing, it drives him to help his family, but does he really have to go this far? Does it really have to cost him his childhood? The truth is, nobody would be cross or disappointed with him if he admitted it was all too much for him – even if he thinks they would. He is truly a hero, but it's because of his attitude, not his actions.

Our boy is struggling, and he needs to ask for help. His admirable sense of responsibility might stop him from asking, but sometimes it's important to know that it's ok to think about yourself once in a while. If you're tired, and you're working hard, trying your best, but struggling – don't do it alone... ask for help. Nobody will think you're weak. It takes a very strong person to admit they can't do everything on their own, and ultimately you're more of a hero if you do.

What would you do in this situation? Would you be brave and carry on regardless, or would you be the hero and ask for help? If you feel like you're struggling, contact us; in Harrogate

it's 01423 500555, and in Craven it's 01756 700888. Alternatively, hit us with an email at yc@carersresource.org