

## Young Carers' Dilemma: Family Responsibility, Bonding and Commitment to Supporting Their Mentally Ill Parent in Taiwan

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**Abstract :** This study explored the recollections of young carers who lived with and cared for their mentally ill parent and how they managed life difficulties in Taiwan. 19 former young carers took part in the study, conducted from July to October 2021. The findings provided the unique view that all the participants acknowledged being taught by the mainstream culture to honour family value and prioritize the needs of parents over their own ones, they stepped in to care for the ill parent out of love and out of necessity through there having no-one to turn to, they were willing to assume long-term caring responsibilities, strikingly, a much more common experience was that the participants hid parental illness and young carer identity in the community through the fear of social discrimination attached to mental illness. As a result, these former young carers stayed in hidden circumstances and coped alone with caring challenges. The findings suggest that there needs multi-disciplinary services working together to recognize the needs of young carers and provide appropriate intervention to young carers based on a family-focus approach and ensure to serve the best interests of young carers and their families. It is to be hope that young carers can grow up safely and healthily within the community.

**Keywords :** young carers, family well-being, mental health, parental mental illness

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