Ryan's Story

Hey, I'm Ryan. I'm 17 and in my final year of school, getting ready for my A-levels.
It's a stressful time for most people my age, but for me, it's even more intense because I'm also a young carer for my mum.

My mum has a long-term illness that affects her mobility and energy levels. Some days she can get around the house with a walking frame, but other days she's in bed most of the time. I help her with things like cooking, cleaning, sorting out her medication, and sometimes even helping her get dressed or move around safely.

I've been doing this for a few years now, but it's gotten harder recently because of the pressure of exams. I try to revise in the evenings after I've made dinner and helped mum settle for the night, but I'm often so tired that it's hard to concentrate. I've had to learn how to manage my time really carefully - revising in short bursts during the day or on the bus to school helps.

There are days when I feel overwhelmed, like I'm being pulled in two directions. I want to do well in my exams so I can go to university and build a future, but I also don't want to let mum down. She always tells me she's proud of me and that she wants me to chase my dreams, even if it means one day moving away.

When I get a bit of time to myself, I listen to music or go for a walk to clear my head. I've also started journaling - it helps me get my thoughts out and stay focused.

Being a young carer has made me more mature and responsible, but it's also made me realise how important support is. I've started talking to my school's support team, and they've helped me find ways to balance everything a bit better.

I'm not just a student or a carer - I'm both. And even though it's tough, I know I'm doing something that matters.

Thanks for reading my story.