This is Ray.

Ray is in their last year of high school. Currently, Ray is concerned with keeping up their grades for university.

Outside of school, Ray enjoys dancing with friends in their free time.

They also have a part time job at the library to help save for university.

Ray is part of a family of three: Ray, their mother Amrit, and their younger sister. They speak Punjabi at home.
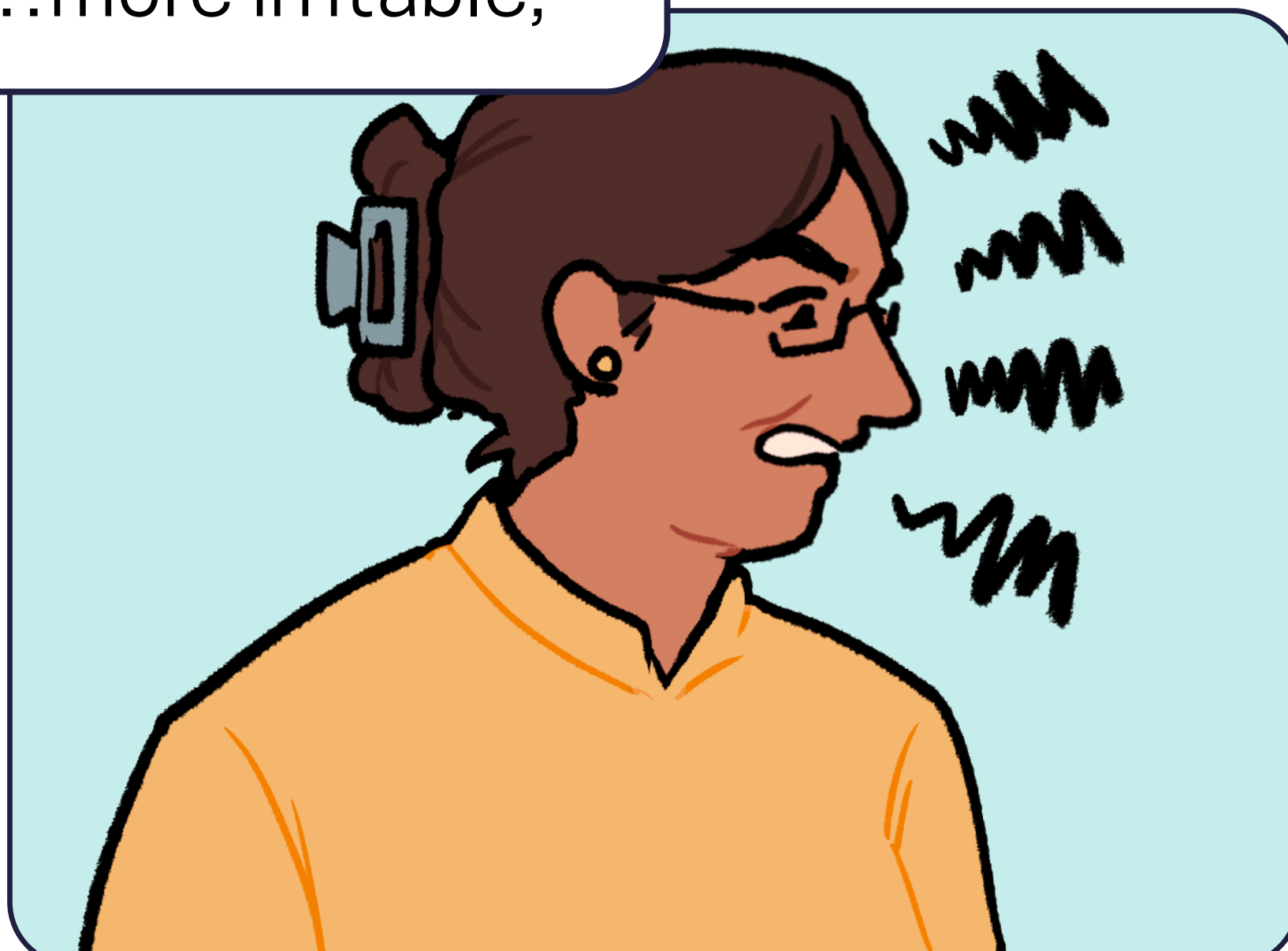
Almost 5 million Canadians speak a language other than English and French at home, like Ray and their family.

Growing up, Amrit would sometimes struggle with her mental health. In those times, Ray stepped up to help Amrit and take care of their home.

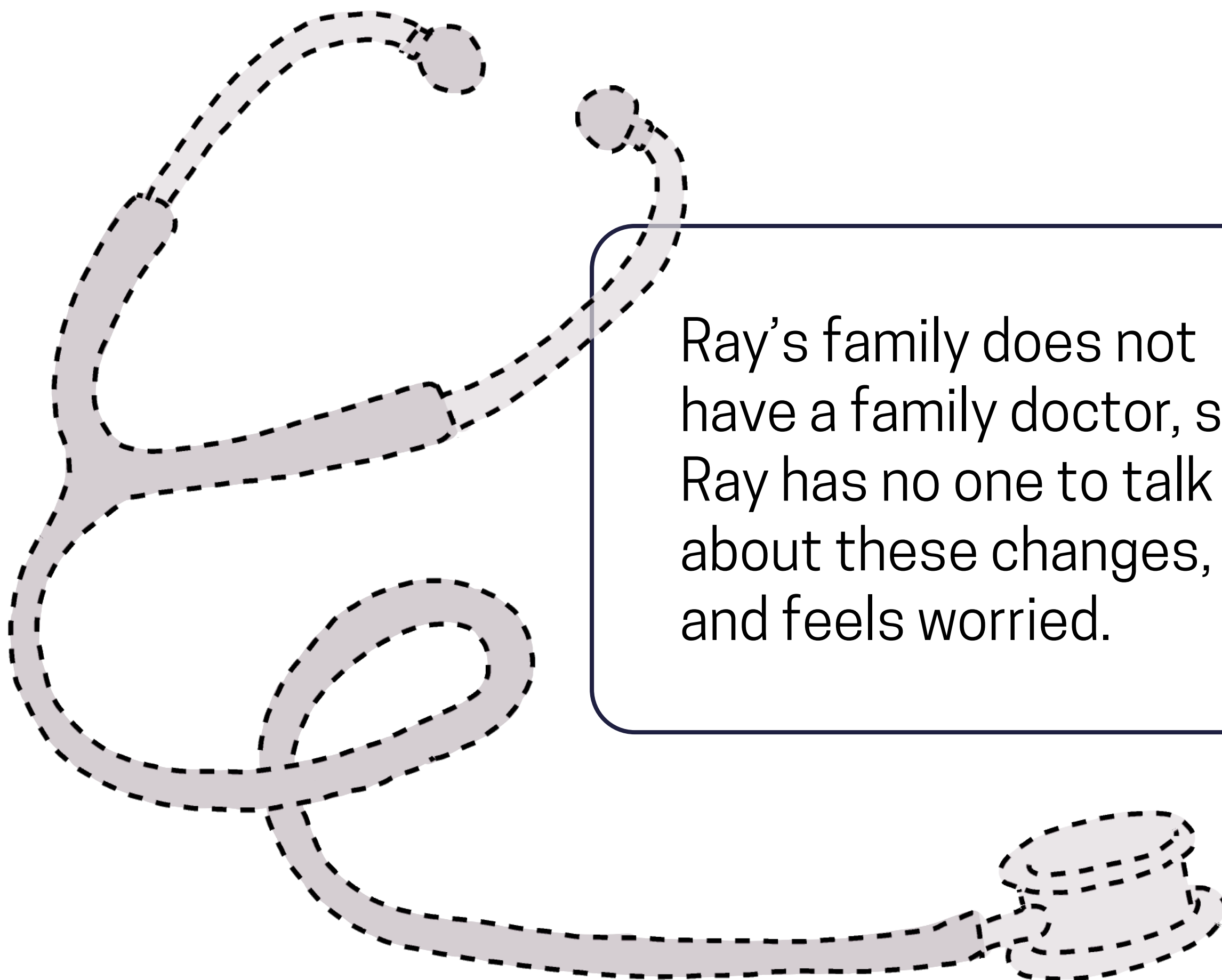Recently, Ray has noticed changes. Compared to before, Amrit is…

…more irritable,

more confused, and more forgetful.

She recently forgot a lifelong recipe of a dessert she took pride in making.
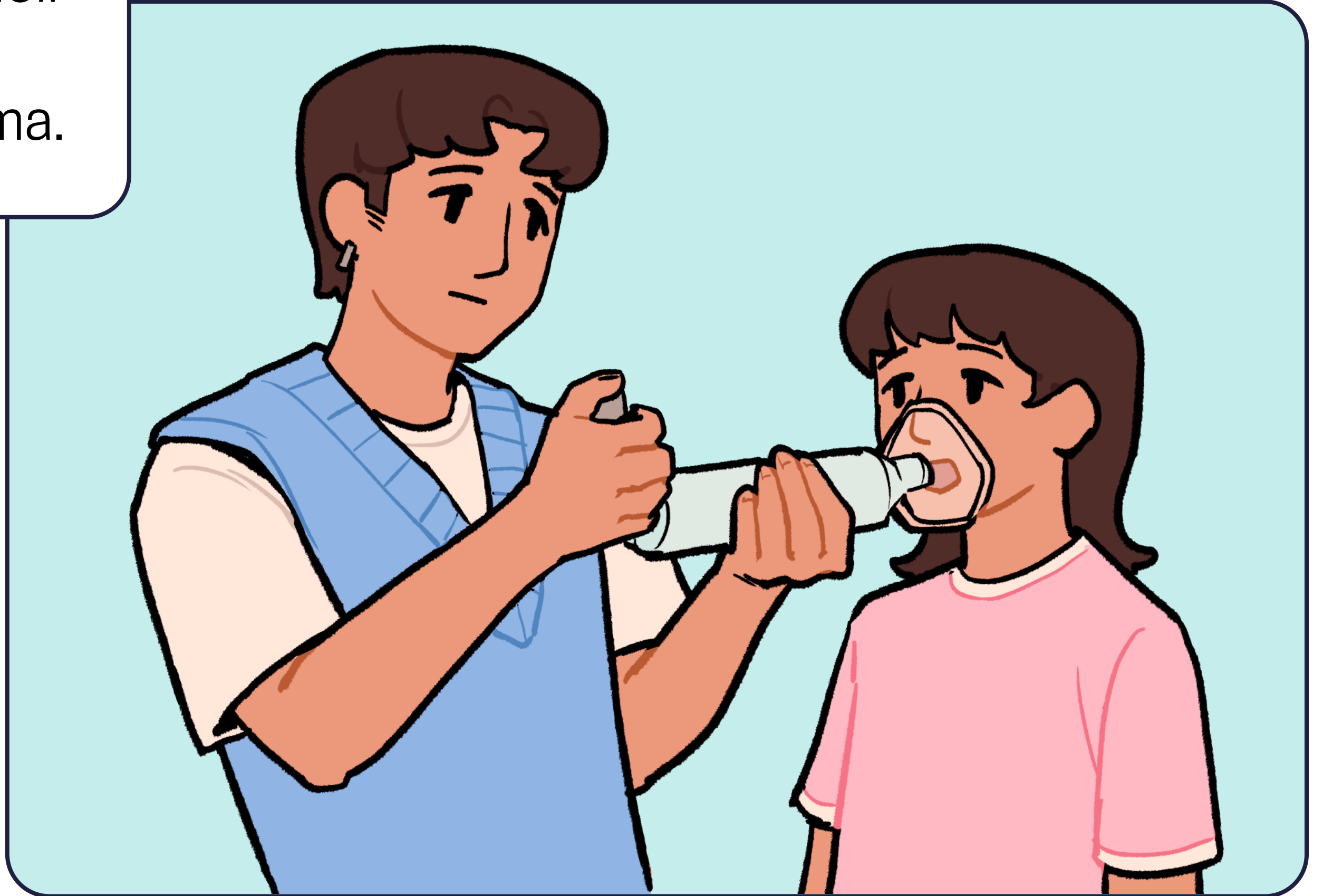
Ray's family does not have a family doctor, so Ray has no one to talk to about these changes, and feels worried.

As a result, Ray takes on more responsibilities at home.

On weekdays, Ray takes care of cooking and cleaning before Amrit wakes up, and heads to school afterwards.

Ray also helps their sister take daily puffers for asthma.

As a result, Ray has much less time for...

...socializing and dancing with friends,

...studying to maintain grades,

...and working at their part-time job, so they cannot save up as much money for university.

Ray is feeling stressed, overwhelmed, and isolated.

Ray is worried that attending university next year while supporting their family may be unmanageable.

With Ray's current responsibilities, Ray would be considered a **young carer**.

But, not everyone sees themselves as a young carer, or identifies with this label.

Who are young carers?
Also known as "young caregivers"

People under the age of 25 who provide significant and ongoing care and support to a family member or loved one.

Culture influences caregiving in numerous ways. Some families and cultures may expect young people to support their family members, and this is not always viewed as caregiving.

One day, Amrit is disoriented and falls down the stairs. She is admitted to the hospital.

EMS
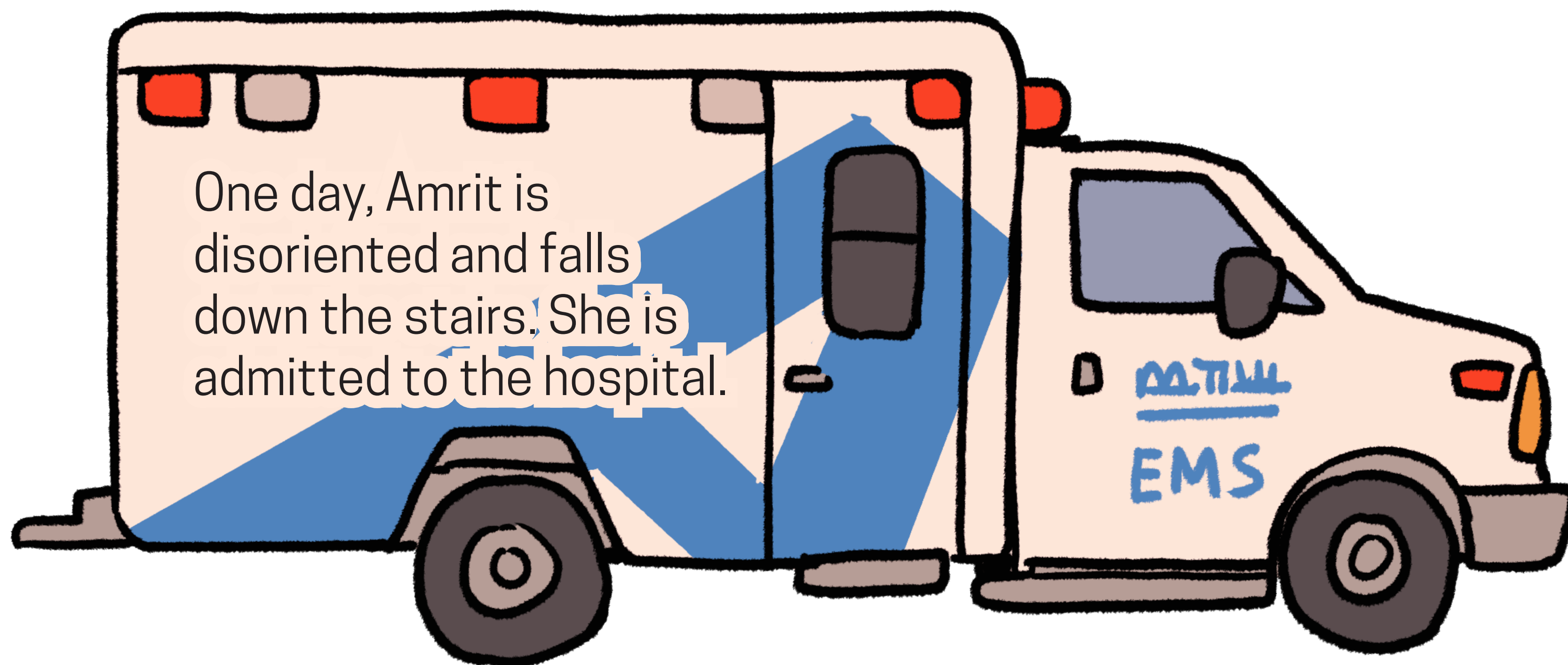
Ray needs to go to school, but worries about leaving Amrit in the hospital. Amrit speaks some English, but Ray often helps interpret for her.

Ray tries to voice their concerns to the care team, but feels like the care team doesn't have time to listen.

Ray ends up going to school, waiting for a call from the care team about Amrit's condition.

No call arrives.

After school, Ray visits the hospital and finds that Amrit can be discharged soon because she has no broken bones.

Ray steps out of Amrit's hospital room feeling very overwhelmed.

Up to this point, Ray has felt uninformed and left out of their mother's care, and has had no one to confide in.

Ray, whose caregiving role is embedded in their family and culture, does not see themselves as a young carer.

Because of this, they may have never had access to resources that support caregiving.

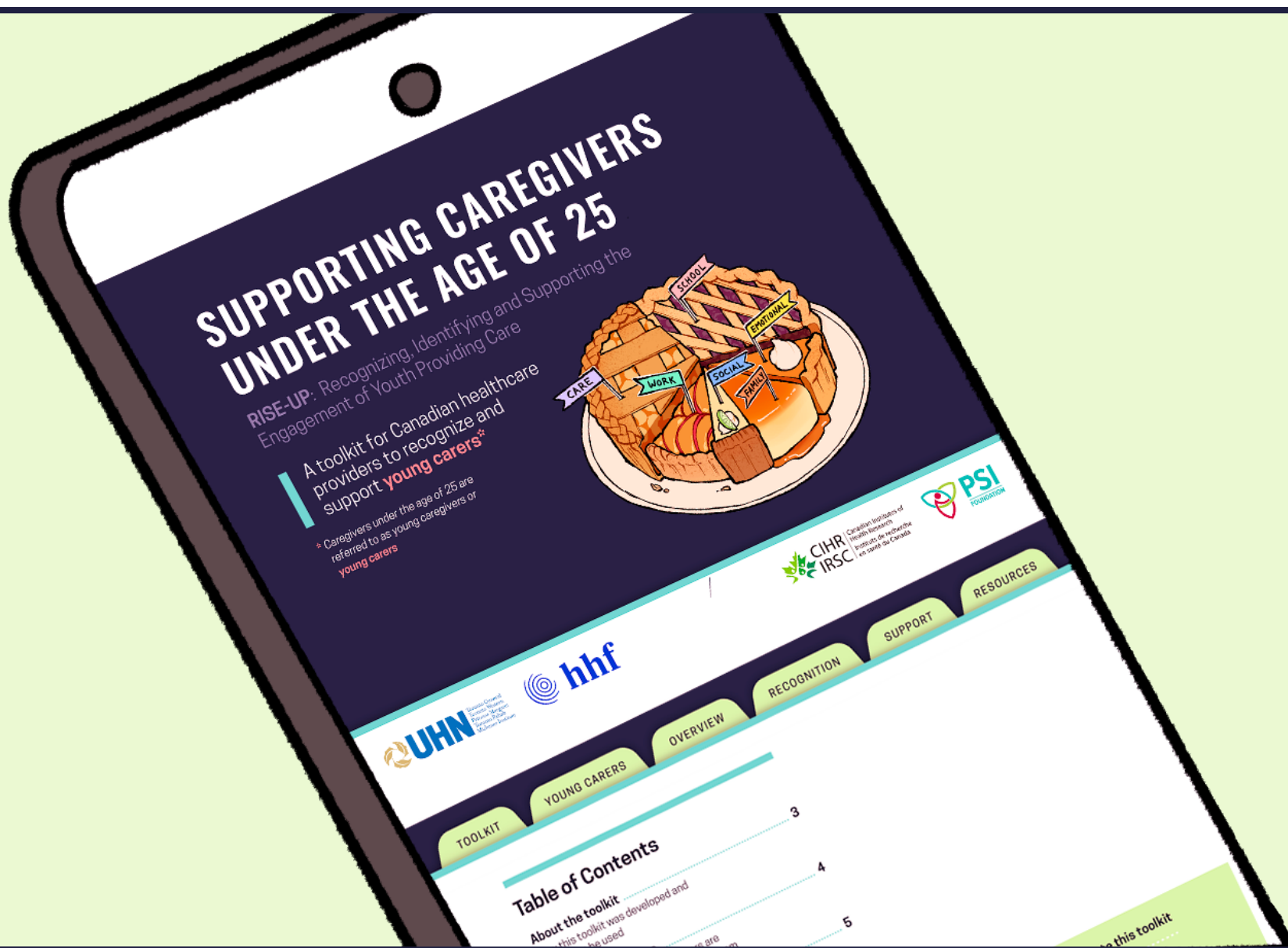A nurse on the care team sees Ray.

He asks Ray about their concerns, what caring for Amrita is like at home, and how it has impacted their daily life.

The nurse recognized Ray as a caregiver because he reviewed a toolkit about young carers.

The "*Supporting Caregivers Under the Age of 25*" toolkit can help healthcare providers recognize and support people like Ray.
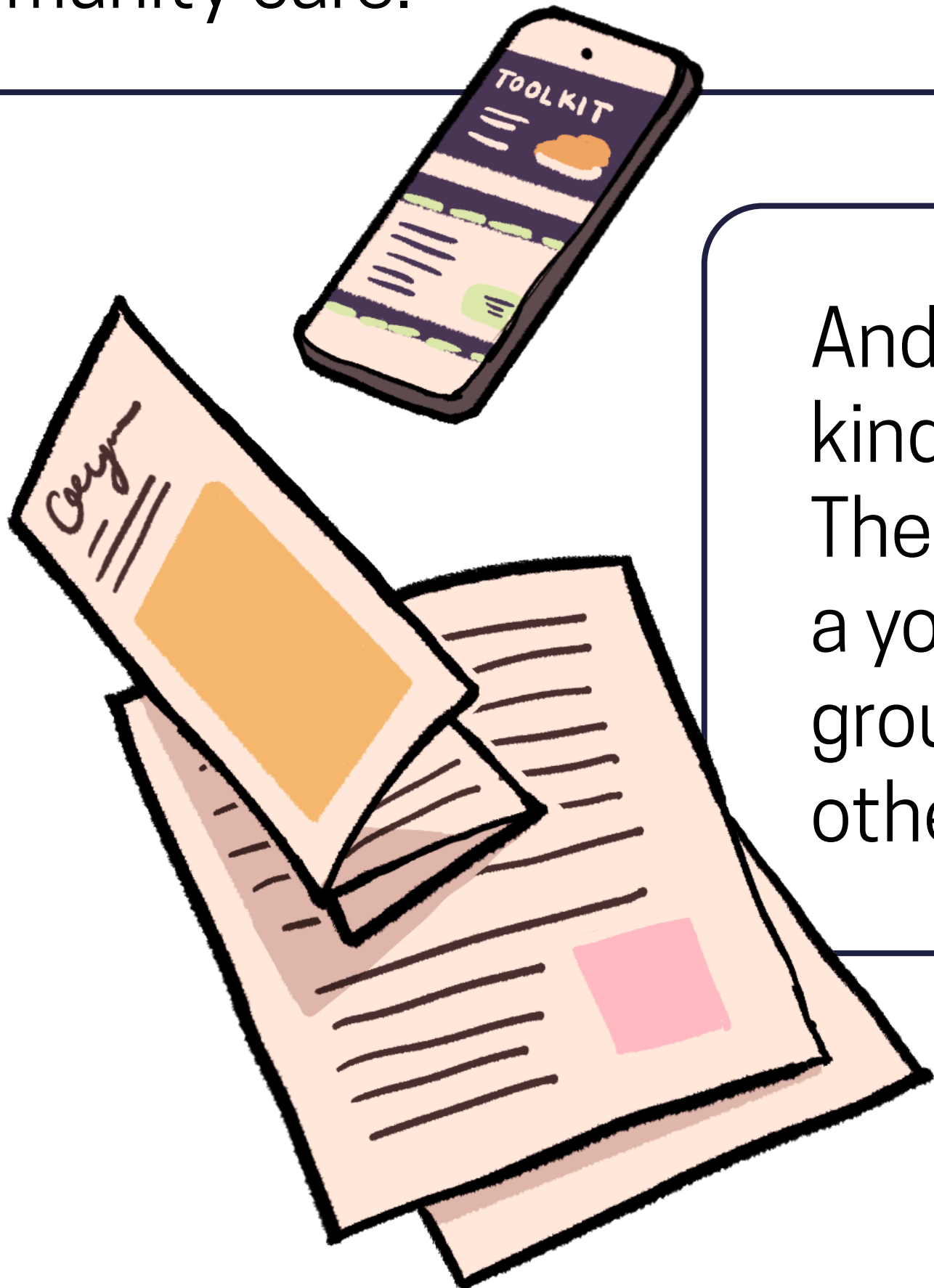
The nurse appreciates that Ray is an important part of the care team, and applies what he learned from the toolkit.

First, he updates Amrit's chart with Ray's contact information.

Then, the nurse contacts the care team's social worker to help coordinate occupational therapy and community care.

And finally, he asks what kind of support Ray needs. The nurse connects Ray to a young carer support group and provides a few other resources.

Ray still has a lot on their plate, but it helps to have a care team that understands the importance of engaging with caregivers.
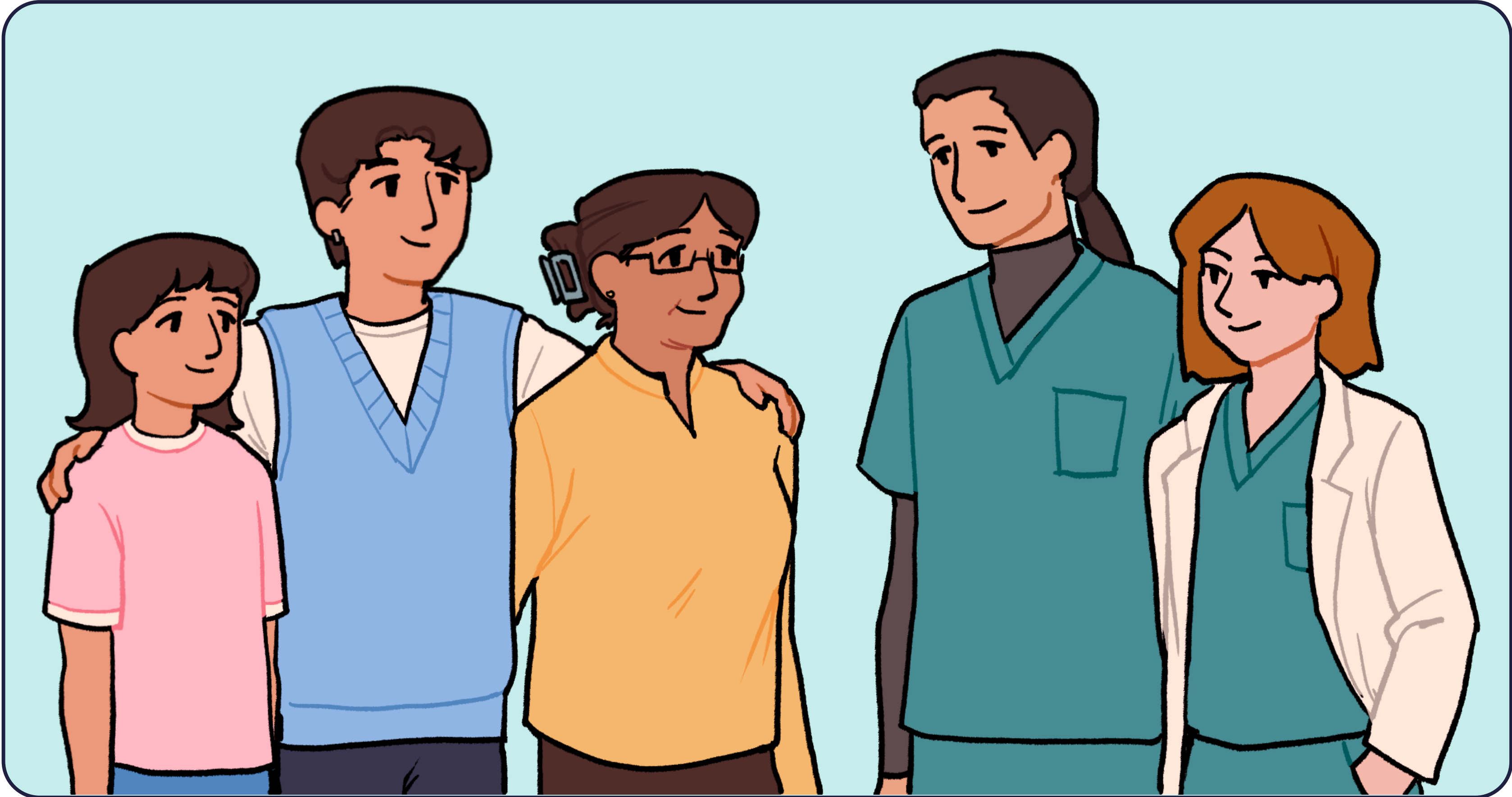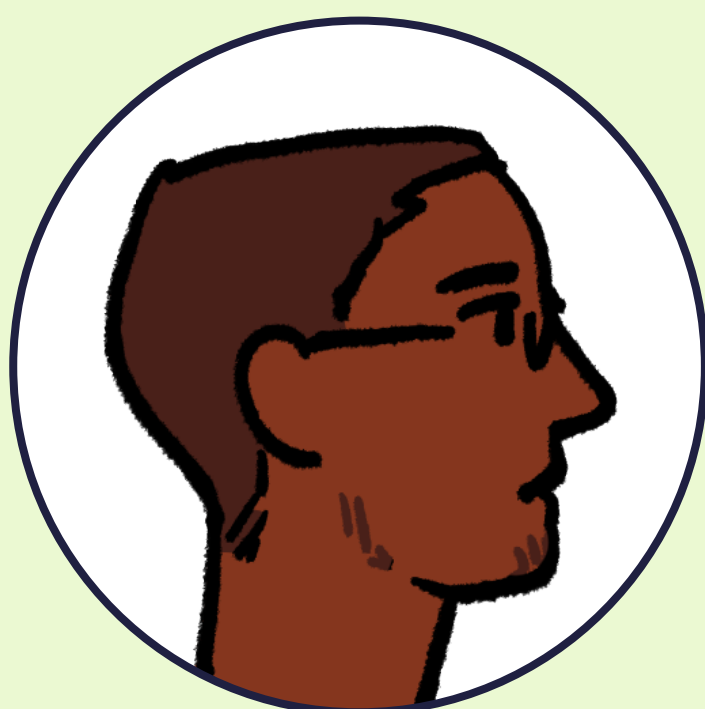
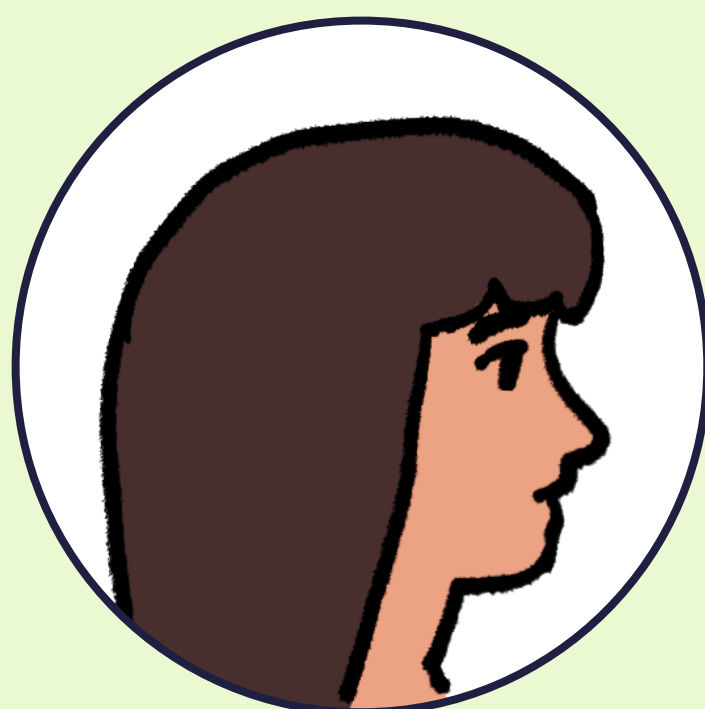**Ray's story is only one example of a young carer's journey.**

Across Canada, there are countless young carers, each with different experiences. Caregiving spans age, gender, ethnicity, and relationship types.
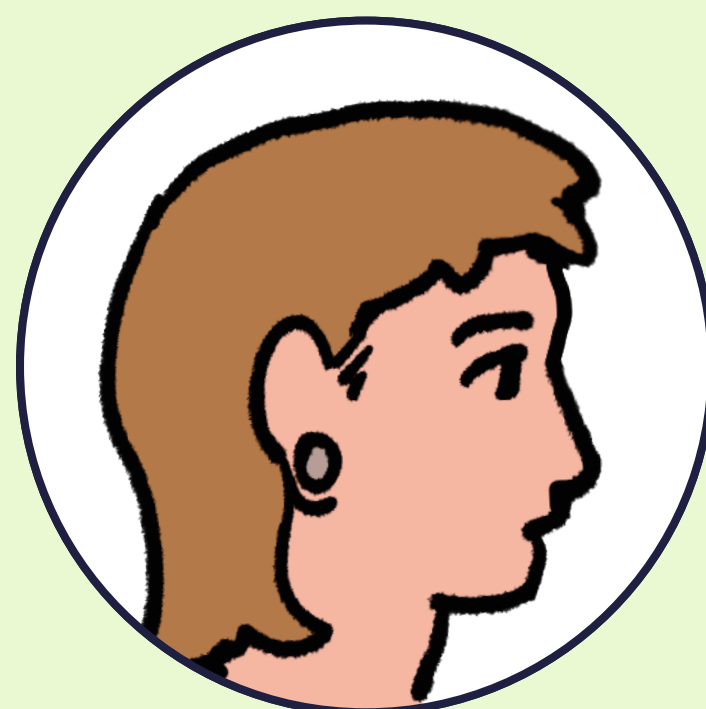
Ray

Hassan

Tina

Riley

Navigating the healthcare system is difficult. For young carers who may be unfamiliar with the system or at critical points in their life, it is even more challenging.

Caregivers are the backbone of our healthcare systems. An important first step for healthcare providers to support young carers is to acknowledge their caring roles and the expertise they hold.

You can view the "***Supporting Caregivers Under the Age of 25***" toolkit by scanning this QR code.