

AFCCA: Youth Insights

What Siblings want their Siblings Exhibiting AFCCA to Understand

“People have depth and there’s always going to be something going on to explain why they are behaving the way they are...”

What is AFCCA?

Aggression toward Family/Caregivers in Childhood and Adolescence (AFCCA) is a pattern of behaviour that causes significant physical and/or psychological harm to the child/teen showing the aggression, to the person(s) who the aggression is directed at, and to other family members who may witness it.

AFCCA can look like

- swearing a lot, saying mean things or yelling at family members;
- threatening to hurt family members or pets;
- self-harming or hurting yourself;
- physically hurting family members or pets;
- damaging objects or stealing money;
- threatening to cause sexual harm to family members.

A new study in Canada asked the questions:

What are the needs of young people impacted by AFCCA?

How does it feel to live in a home where your sibling displays aggressive behaviour?

Siblings of young people who demonstrated AFCCA helped to answer these questions, from a human rights perspective, through interviews and surveys. You can learn more about this study [here](#).¹

We both have rights!

We both have the right to:

- be heard and have our views taken seriously.
- feel, and be, safe in our own home.
- have our best interests balanced and protected.
- get support that can help us communicate with each other better.

Please learn more about our rights based on the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

When a youth is experiencing AFCCA, here’s what their sibling often wants them to know

I understand that when you need help, you sometimes express that need through aggression.

I understand you don’t always know how to communicate what you are trying to get out.

I want to understand what you’re trying to communicate through your actions.
Can we find a way to talk about it, so I can know if I can help you?

I care about you, and I want to understand why you act the way you do sometimes, so that we can get along better.

I need support (and maybe therapy) too, so I can better understand how to help you and build our relationship.

We need to communicate with the adults in our lives, so they can support both of us and our relationship.

Your behaviour affects me, so I’m allowed to have opinions about what help we all need.
I want it to get better for all of us.

¹ DeCarlo-Slobodnik, D., & Gervais, C. (2022). *Young persons’ reflections on their rights as children in the context of aggression toward family and caregivers in childhood and adolescence*. University of Ottawa. <https://www.adopt4life.com/resource-library/young-persons-reflections-on-their-rights-as-children-in-the-context-of-afcca>

