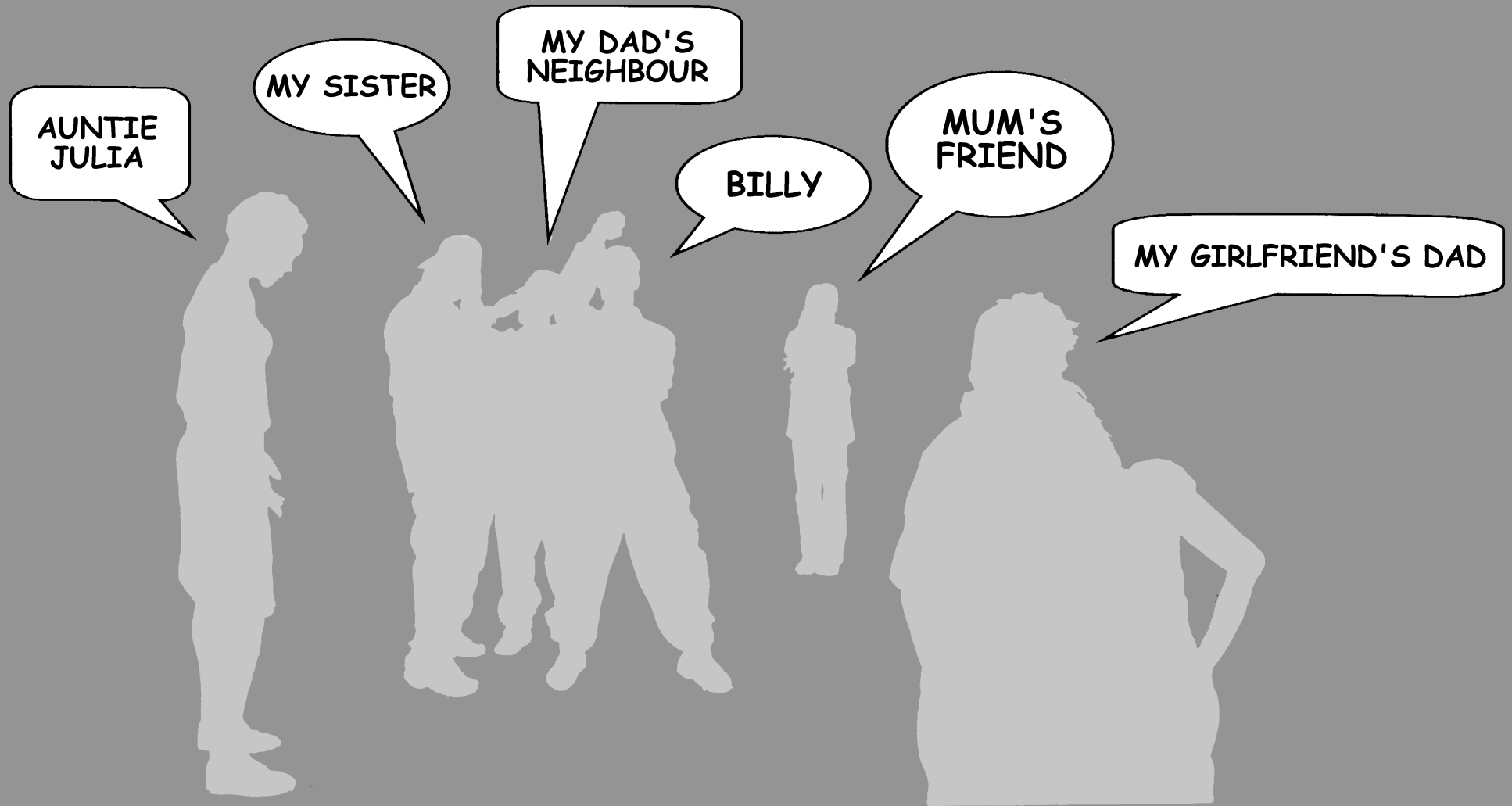


YOU KNOW who's most important to you...



DO THE PEOPLE HELPING you to leave care KNOW?

IF THEY DON'T KNOW... THEY CAN'T HELP!

4

USEFUL THINGS YOU CAN DO IF YOU ARE LEAVING CARE SOON...

1. Think about who is most important in your life at the moment...
2. Make sure people helping you to leave care know who is really important to you...
3. Consider how people special to you (family or not) might be able to help you, such as coming to meetings, or showing you how to cook your favorite meal...
4. If there is someone you would like to be included when you're making plans for leaving care - ask your social worker if they can be involved!

PROBLEM PAGE . . .

"He wants to help me..."

Q My older brother Mark would do anything to help me when I leave care. He's said he'll lend me things I need and help me get sorted. I'd like to see him more but he lives 40 miles away. My social worker says she has to ask my dad to my review meetings, but I don't like him coming 'cos we just don't see eye to eye. I'd like Mark to come instead, but I don't know if it's allowed.

A Your brother sounds great! He really wants to support you as you leave care. Explain to your social worker that Mark is someone special who wants to help you, and that you'd like him to be involved when you're making plans for your future. It could be really useful for your brother to be included in meetings or discussions before you actually leave care.

"Gran stops me from seeing them..."

Q I've always blamed my Grandmother (my dad's mum) for pushing me into care. I'd like to see more of my Dad's side of the family, especially as I'm due to leave care this year, but I don't know how. My Gran won't have anything to do with me and I'm worried she's saying bad things about me and doesn't want my aunts and cousins to see me anymore.

A It must be upsetting to feel cut off from part of your family like this. Make sure your social worker knows which members of the family are most important to you and ask for help in keeping in touch with them, as this problem with your gran may prevent you from getting help from people in your family who really care about you.

"I feel like they're my real family now..."

Q I'm 17 and living with foster carers, although I'm due to leave care in about six months time. My girlfriend is the most important person in my life and I have become really close to her and her family, especially as I don't see much of my own relatives. Are they allowed to come to social services meetings with me?

A It's great that you're getting along so well with your girlfriend and her family! Even though they are not your own 'blood relatives' they are clearly very important to you at the moment. Tell your social worker how you feel and ask how they could be more involved in planning for your future.

DID YOU KNOW?

WHEN ASKED BY RESEARCHERS...

Most young people in care could name someone who was especially important in their lives, and who they felt they could turn to for help and support...

BUT...

more than half of their social workers weren't aware of who this was!

Care leavers usually chose someone who they knew would always be there for them. These 'most important people' really wanted to support the young person leaving care...

BUT...

hardly any of them had been to their most recent review and most were very unsure what help the young person would be offered after care!