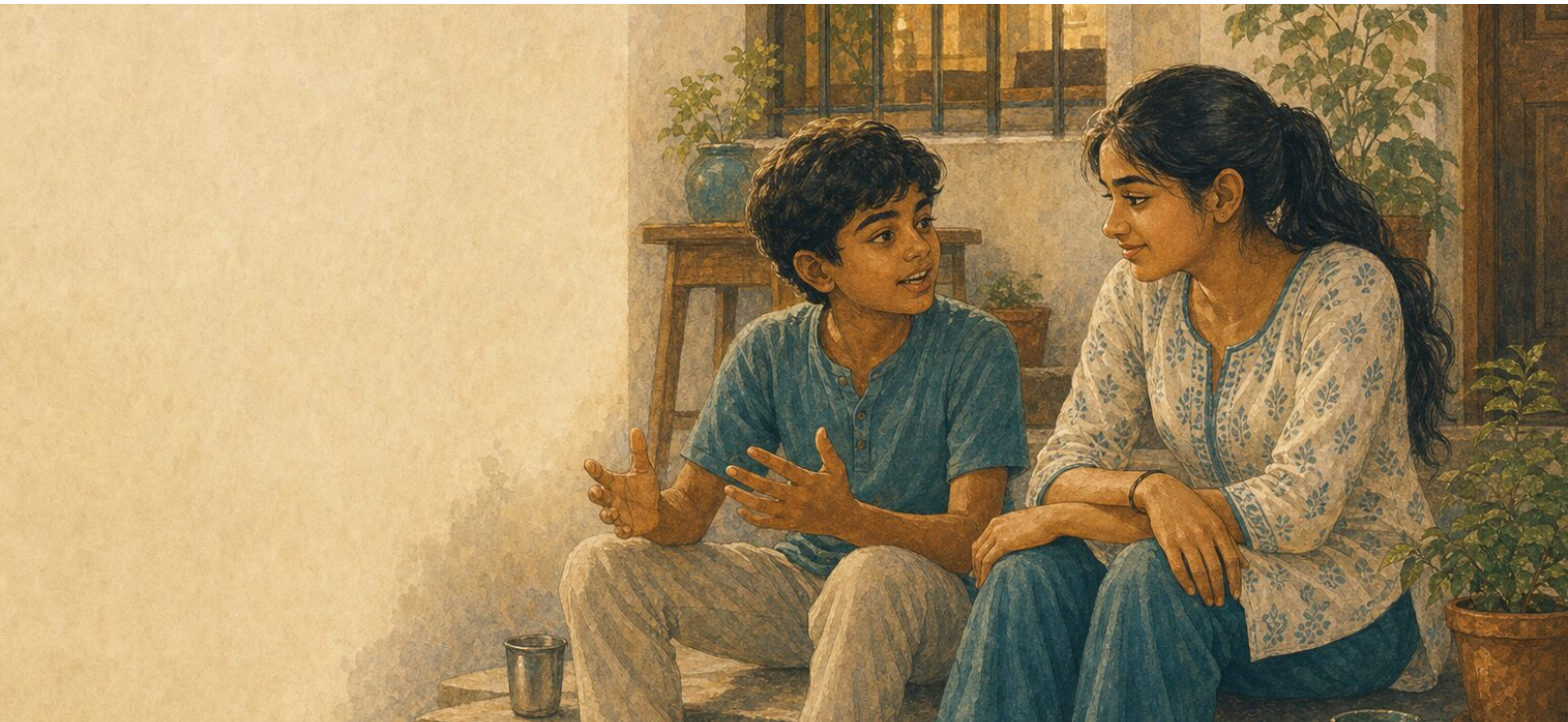




*The Sibling's Guide*

 NEURODIVERGENCE

# Your sibling and ADHD

*A warm, plain guide for the brother or sister of someone with ADHD: why the house tilted the way it did, the load you quietly carried, and how to be there for them without losing yourself.*

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**Who this is for:** the brother or sister of someone who has ADHD, or who may have it.

**Cited:** the CDC, NICE, and peer-reviewed research.

**Languages:** English, Hindi, Marathi, and Kannada.

Read it free at [weave.clinic/family](https://weave.clinic/family)

## 1

## ✿ IS THIS YOUR HOUSE

## The one who had to be easy

## ✿ IN SHORT

If you grew up beside a brother or sister who needed more, and you became the calm one, the helpful one, the one who did not add to the noise, this guide is for you. None of that was your imagination.

Maybe your brother could not sit still through dinner. Maybe your sister forgot her books, lost her temper, melted down over homework, and the whole house bent around it. You learned early to read the weather. You learned to go quiet, to help, to not be one more problem.

Growing up next to a sibling with ADHD shapes your days and your feelings in real ways. Many siblings end up taking on extra helping, watch more of their parents' time and attention go to the other child, and carry a tangle of feelings about it. You were not making it up, and you were not being dramatic.

# So many

siblings quietly become the steady one

Many brothers and sisters of a child with ADHD take on extra helping young, and carry the same tangle of love and strain.

For a lot of brothers and sisters, the role arrives without anyone deciding it. You are simply the one who can wait, so you wait. You are the one who copes, so coping becomes your job. Over the years, easy stops being something you feel and becomes something you perform.



*I was the easy one. It took me years to notice that easy was just me asking for nothing.*

Kavya, 17

● TRY THIS

Think of one ordinary thing you started doing young to keep the peace at home: staying quiet, helping, not asking for much. Name it to yourself. You do not have to fix it today. Just see that you carried it.

## 2

## ✿ WHAT IT REALLY IS

## Not bad behaviour, not their fault, not yours

## ✿ IN SHORT

Your sibling's hardest behaviour comes from how their brain handles attention and self-control. It is part of a condition, not them being naughty, and not your parents loving them more than you.

Here is the part that changes how the whole thing feels. When your sibling does not listen, interrupts, acts on impulse, or cannot sit still, that comes from the way their brain develops and manages attention. ADHD is a recognised condition. The behaviour is a symptom, not a choice, and not them being the favourite.

So when your parents gave them more time, more reminders, more watching, that was usually them answering a bigger need, not loving you less. It can still have felt deeply unfair from where you stood. Both things are true at once.



Kavya, packing two bags before school, learning young to be the one who remembers.

Kavya is seventeen. Her brother Dev is eleven and has ADHD. For years she thought her parents simply preferred him. He got the help with homework, the patience, the second and third chances. She got "you are older, you understand." It took her a long time to see that Dev was not being handed an easy life. He was struggling with something real, and the extra attention was the family trying to keep up with it.

**More, if you want it ^**

This does not mean every unfair thing was fair really. Parents get tired and stretched, and sometimes the balance genuinely tips too far for too long. Understanding why it happened is not the same as saying it never cost you anything. You are allowed to hold both: it was not a punishment aimed at you, and it was still hard to be the child who needed less.

**● TRY THIS**

The next time the old thought shows up, "they always loved him more", try swapping it for "he needed more help, and that is not the same as more love." Notice whether your chest loosens even a little.

## 3

## ✿ THE LOAD YOU DID NOT CHOOSE

## The weight nobody handed you on purpose

## ✿ IN SHORT

Helping out, calming things down, growing up a little too fast: these are real loads. So is feeling resentful, and then feeling guilty for the resentment. All of it is normal.

When a sibling needs a lot, the brother or sister beside them often quietly takes on jobs that are really the adults' to carry. You may have become a second parent, a peacekeeper, a translator between your sibling and the rest of the house. Many siblings in this spot feel a hard mix: stress, worry, sometimes resentment, and then guilt for resenting someone who is struggling.

That guilt is the cruel part. You love them. You also got tired, or jealous, or angry that your own things kept getting smaller. Feeling both love and resentment does not make you a bad sibling. It makes you a real one.



The loads a brother or sister often carries without anyone naming them out loud.

The helper: doing tasks and minding your sibling that were really the grown-ups' job.

The peacekeeper: shrinking yourself so the house stays calm.

The quiet one: keeping your own struggles hidden so you are not one more worry.

The guilt: feeling bad for resenting someone who is genuinely having a hard time.

In many Indian homes this load is almost invisible, because it looks like being good. The responsible older sister, the understanding younger brother, the child who never complains. Relatives praise it. Nobody asks what it costs. Being called mature young is sometimes just praise for a load you should not have had to carry.

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#### More, if you want it

There can also be a flip side worth naming. Some siblings grow real strengths from this: patience, empathy, the ability to read a room, a steadiness friends come to rely on. That can be true and the load can still have been too heavy. You are allowed to value what you learned without pretending it was free.

#### ● TRY THIS

Look at the four loads above. Tick the one that feels most like you. Then say, just to yourself: that was a lot for a kid. You are not complaining by admitting it.

## 4

## ✿ WITHOUT LOSING YOURSELF

## Being there, but as the sibling

## ✿ IN SHORT

You can love your sibling and support them without becoming their third parent. Your job is to be their brother or sister. The treating and the managing belong to the adults.

There is a real difference between helping sometimes and being responsible for someone. Helping is handing your sister her bag when she forgets it. Being responsible is feeling that her whole day is yours to fix. You are the sibling, not the parent, and that boundary is allowed to exist.

What genuinely helps your sibling is often smaller and warmer than you think. Being a person who is not always correcting them. Noticing what they are good at out loud. Being someone safe in a house that often feels like one long instruction. Siblings do better, and so do the kids with ADHD, when the family treats the brother or sister as someone to be heard, not as a spare carer.

It also means you are allowed to say no. You can step back from a job that is too big. You can tell a parent, "I love Dev, but I cannot be the one in charge of his homework." Drawing that line does not abandon your sibling. It puts the responsibility back where it belongs, with the adults and the doctor.

 **REMEMBER**

You did not cause your sibling's ADHD, and you cannot cure it. Loving them is your part. Treating it is not. The most useful thing you can be is a steady brother or sister, not an unpaid, untrained, exhausted carer.

 **TRY THIS**

Think of one thing you currently do for your sibling that is really an adult's job. Just one. Picture handing it back to a parent this week, kindly. You do not have to do it yet. Notice how the idea feels.

## 5

## ✿ LOOKING AFTER YOU

**Your needs are real too**

## ✿ IN SHORT

You did not choose this house, and your needs did not stop mattering just because someone else's were louder. Looking after yourself is not selfish. It is overdue.

Somewhere along the way you may have decided your job was to need nothing. To be fine. To be the easy one so the adults had one less thing. That decision made sense back then. It is also a heavy way to live, and it is one of the reasons siblings of kids with ADHD can quietly carry more worry and low mood than anyone notices.

Your feelings deserve direct attention, not because something is wrong with you, but because you are a person in this family too. Wanting time, attention and care of your own is not taking anything away from your sibling.

In a joint family, where everyone is watching and comparing, it can feel impossible to ask for anything without seeming ungrateful. You are not ungrateful. You are a young person who spent years being told, gently, to wait. It is fair to stop waiting now.

More, if you want it ^

Looking after yourself can be small and ordinary. One friend who knows the real story. One adult, a teacher, an aunt, a cousin, who actually listens. Something that is just yours, that the house does not get to manage. You do not have to earn rest by being useful first. The care you keep giving out, you are allowed to point some of it back at yourself.



*I kept waiting for someone to ask if I was okay. I had to learn to be the one who asked.*

Kavya, 17

● TRY THIS

Name one thing you need that you have been quietly going without: rest, time alone, someone to talk to, a hobby that is only yours. Pick one. Tell one safe person about it this week. That is not selfish. That is you, finally on your own list.

## 6

## ✿ GETTING HELP

## Whose job this really is

## ✿ IN SHORT

Your sibling's care is a doctor's and your parents' job, not a weight for you to carry alone. Talking openly, as a family, takes pressure off everyone, including you.

You were never meant to manage your sibling's condition by yourself. ADHD is something doctors, parents and schools handle together, with a real plan. When the whole family understands what is going on and talks about it honestly, things get easier for everyone, the child with ADHD and the brother or sister beside them.

That honesty includes you. You deserve clear, age-appropriate answers about what ADHD is, why your sibling acts the way they do, and what the plan is. You are someone to be informed and listened to, not a stand-in carer. There are even family programmes built around exactly this, giving siblings real understanding and a proper say.



*The brother or sister who quietly  
held the house together deserves to  
be held too.*

### ● TRY THIS

Pick one honest sentence you could say to a parent this week, calmly, not as a fight. Something like, "I want to understand Dev's ADHD better, and I want us to talk about how it has been for me too." Write it on your phone. Saying it out loud, even once, moves the weight off you and back onto the family, where it belongs.

### WHERE THIS COMES FROM

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### FURTHER READING

- Sibs: the UK charity for brothers and sisters of disabled or chronically ill people, support for adult and young siblings

This guide helps you recognise and understand. It is not a diagnosis. For that, see a professional.

- Feeling like it is all too much? **Read the crisis card.** Help is one page away.