



The Sibling's Guide

🌿 NEURODIVERGENCE

Your sibling and autism

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

Who this is for: the brother or sister of someone who is autistic, or who may be.

Cited: peer-reviewed autism research.

Languages: English, Hindi, Marathi, and Kannada.

Read it free at weave.clinic/family

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✿ IS THIS YOUR HOUSE

When the house tilts around one child

✿ IN SHORT

If a lot of your home seems to revolve around your autistic brother or sister, and you have learned to ask for less, you are not selfish for noticing. You are seeing something real.

Maybe plans change around what your sibling can manage. Maybe outings get cut short, or never happen. Maybe your parents are stretched thin, and you have quietly become the easy one, the one who does not add to the pile. Maybe you love your sibling and feel left out in the same breath. None of that makes you a bad brother or sister.

This booklet is for you, not your sibling. It will help you understand what is going on, make sense of your own feelings, and find ways to be there for them without disappearing yourself.



Riya, sixteen, who learned early to take up less space.

Riya is sixteen. Her younger brother Aman is autistic. From the time she was small, she understood that loud places and sudden changes were hard for him, so she stopped asking to go to them. She helps without being asked, smooths things over, and never mentions when she is tired. Everyone calls her mature. No one notices she has been a little lonely for years.

Riya is not complaining, and neither are you when you notice the same thing. Loving your sibling and wanting some of the attention too are not opposites. Both can be true at once.

● TRY THIS

Think of one way your home tilts toward your sibling. Just name it to yourself, without guilt. Noticing it is not betrayal. It is the first honest step.

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✿ WHY IT TILTS

It is wiring, not choice

✿ IN SHORT

Your sibling is not being difficult on purpose. Autism is a different way the brain is built, and once you understand it, a lot of the hard moments start to make sense.

Your sibling experiences the world differently. Everyday sounds, lights, and textures that you barely notice can genuinely overwhelm them, because sensory differences are a real, core part of autism. A meltdown is not a tantrum or bad behaviour; it is a nervous system that has hit its limit.

They also communicate differently, and that gap goes both ways. It is not that your sibling cannot connect, it is that your wiring and theirs read each other differently. When researchers had people pass on a story, autistic people understood other autistic people just fine; the misses happened mostly between autistic and non-autistic people. So when your sibling does not respond the way you expect, it is usually not rejection. It is a different language.

● TRY THIS

Next time your sibling does something that frustrates you, try asking: what might they be feeling or needing right now? You will not always get it right. Just asking changes how it feels.

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✿ THE LOAD YOU CARRY

The weight nobody sees

✿ IN SHORT

Brothers and sisters of an autistic child often carry an extra load that no one quite names. If you sometimes feel more worry or sadness than your friends do, that is real, and it is common.

You are not imagining it. When researchers pooled many studies, siblings of autistic children did carry a bit more, with somewhat more worry and low feelings, and a harder time in the sibling bond at times. But here is the other half, and it matters: most siblings do okay overall, especially when they are supported and not left to carry it alone.



The quiet loads a brother or sister carries, often without anyone naming them.

Being the easy one, so your parents have less to worry about.

Explaining or defending your sibling to other people.

Holding your own needs back so you do not add to the pile.

Worrying about your sibling, and about the future, more than you let on.

In many Indian families, the brother or sister is also quietly expected to be a future carer, and you may already feel that weight before anyone says it out loud. Siblings here often focus so hard on their autistic brother or sister that they barely mention their own struggles. Carrying some of this is part of being family. Carrying all of it, silently, is too much for one young person.

● TRY THIS

Write down one thing you have been carrying that nobody knows about. You do not have to fix it or show anyone. Getting it out of your head and onto paper makes it lighter.

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✿ YOUR FEELINGS COUNT

All of it is allowed

✿ IN SHORT

You can love your sibling and still feel frustrated, embarrassed, jealous, or worn out. Mixed feelings are not betrayal. They are what being human in a complicated family looks like.

Maybe you feel guilty for wanting a normal outing. Maybe you have been embarrassed in public and then hated yourself for it. Maybe you are angry that so much falls on your house, and then ashamed of the anger. None of these feelings make you a bad sibling, and pushing them down only makes them heavier.

The truth is you are allowed your own life: your friends, your interests, your bad days, your dreams. Loving your sibling does not require you to give those up. A brother or sister who is also allowed to be a whole person is better for everyone, including your sibling.

● TRY THIS

Name one feeling about your sibling you usually hide, even from yourself. Say it in your head without judging it: "It is okay that I feel this." Feelings you allow stop running the show.

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✿ WITHOUT LOSING YOURSELF

Being there, and being you

✿ IN SHORT

You are the sibling, not the parent. You can be a real support to your brother or sister and still protect your own time, your own needs, and your own future.

You do not have to fix your sibling or run the house. Some of the warmest things you can give are small and on their terms: a shared interest, a quiet activity side by side, a steady presence that does not demand they perform. **Connect with your sibling in their language, not by forcing them into yours.**



Riya and Aman, side by side on something he loves.

Riya stopped trying to make Aman do things her way, and started joining him in his. She sits with him while he lines up his trains and tells her their names. It is not the chatty bond she once imagined, but it is real, and it is theirs. Many siblings find, like Riya, that they grow real strengths from this: patience, empathy, and a way of seeing people that others their age do not have.

More, if you want it ^

And look after yourself on purpose. Keep one thing that is just yours. Tell one person you trust how things really are at home. Talking to others who get it, a friend, a counsellor, or a group for siblings like you, genuinely helps siblings cope and feel less alone. You are allowed to need support too.

● TRY THIS

Pick one small thing that is just yours, a hobby, a friend, a quiet hour, and protect it this week like it matters. Because you matter, not only as your sibling's helper, but as you.

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✿ GETTING HELP

You do not carry this alone

✿ IN SHORT

Asking for support is not weakness, and the caring is not yours alone to hold. Your family and your sibling's doctors share it with you.

If the weight ever feels like too much, or you are sad or anxious a lot, that is worth telling a trusted adult. A counsellor who understands families like yours can help, and groups where you meet other siblings of autistic children can make you feel far less alone while teaching real ways to cope. Reaching for help is not letting your family down. It is making sure you are okay too.

 REMEMBER

You did not cause your sibling's autism, you cannot cure it, and it is not your job to carry the whole family. Being a loving brother or sister does not mean disappearing. The best thing you can be for your sibling, in the long run, is a whole, well person who is still in their corner.

 IN YOUR CORNER

If it ever gets really heavy, the kind of heavy that does not lift, please tell someone: a parent, a teacher, a counsellor. The crisis card linked below has people you can reach, any time, day or night.



*You can love your sibling with your
whole heart and still keep a whole
life of your own.*

● TRY THIS

Tonight, name one thing you genuinely love about your sibling, and one thing you are proud of in yourself. Both, side by side. That is the balance this whole booklet is about.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

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FURTHER READING

- Sibs: support for brothers and sisters of disabled people
- National Autistic Society: advice and guidance

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

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