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Understanding Virtual Sibshops: A Guide for Parents and Caregivers

What Are Sibshops?

Sibshops are interactive, peer-support workshops designed for siblings of individuals with disabilities, developmental delays, or other support needs. They offer a safe space for siblings to connect, share their experiences, and have fun while learning valuable coping skills.

Virtual Sibshops bring these same benefits to an online setting, making them accessible to more families regardless of location.

Why Are Sibshops Important?

Siblings of children with support needs experience unique challenges, including:

- **Feelings of Isolation** – They may feel alone in their experiences.
- **Increased Responsibilities** – Many take on caregiving roles at a young age.
- **Emotional Complexities** – Feelings of guilt, resentment, or pressure to succeed are common.

Sibshops provide an outlet to address these challenges while also highlighting the **positive aspects** of being a sibling, such as resilience, empathy, and advocacy.

What Happens in a Virtual Sibshop?

Virtual Sibshops are structured to be **engaging, interactive, and fun!** They typically include:

- **Icebreakers and Games** – To build connections and create a comfortable atmosphere.
- **Discussions** – A chance to talk about both the joys and challenges of having a sibling with support needs.
- **Skill-building Activities** – Teaching coping strategies and ways to handle difficult situations.
- **Learning Opportunities** – Providing information on disabilities and available services.



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- **Creative Outlets** – Art, storytelling, and role-playing to encourage self-expression.

Sessions are generally **60–90 minutes long** and facilitated by trained professionals who understand sibling dynamics.

Who Can Participate?

- **Siblings** of individuals with disabilities or medical conditions.
- **Typical Age Range:** Most Sibshops serve kids between **ages 8–13**, though virtual options may expand this range.
- **Independent Participation:** Since Sibshops are online, participants should be comfortable using technology and engaging in virtual discussions.

Benefits of Virtual Sibshops

Research shows that Sibshops positively impact siblings' well-being. A survey of past participants found that:

- ✓ **Over 90%** said Sibshops improved their feelings toward their sibling.
- ✓ **67%** learned coping strategies that helped them in daily life.
- ✓ **75%** felt Sibshops influenced their adult lives.
- ✓ **94%** would recommend Sibshops to other siblings.

How to Get Started

To enroll your child in a virtual Sibshop:

1. **Find a Program** – Many organizations, including children's hospitals and disability support groups, offer virtual Sibshops.
2. **Check Technology Requirements** – Ensure your child has access to a device with video and audio capabilities.
3. **Register in Advance** – Many Sibshops require pre-registration to manage group sizes.
4. **Encourage Open Discussion** – Let your child know this is a safe space to share and learn.

Final Thoughts



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Sibshops create a **sense of belonging and community** for siblings who often feel overlooked. By participating, they gain friendships, coping skills, and a greater understanding of their family dynamics—all in a fun and supportive environment.

For more information, visit [Sibling Support Project](#) or check with local disability organizations.