How do Siblings feel?

According to a national survey from the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, siblings of adults with disabilities are doing relatively well, according to their own self-report. Most of the participants of the survey reported that they benefited psychologically from their sibling relationship and that they truly enjoyed having a close relationship with their brother or sister. Additionally, this survey found that siblings of individuals with disabilities were in good or excellent health and not depressed.

This is not the whole picture, however. Siblings are often overcome with concerns and responsibilities related to the care and support for their sibling with a disability.

COMMON CONCERNS:
- Personal costs: financial, time, relations with spouse/partner
- Dividing responsibility among family
- Death of parents: worry about future responsibilities
- Their own death
- Availability of services (housing, benefits, recreation, respite, transportation)
- Sibling health, safety, and happiness
- Making sure sibling voices are heard
- Helping from a distance
With individuals living longer, adults with disabilities are beginning to outlive their parents. When parents can no longer provide the necessary support, the adult siblings often assume the responsibility. Even though this is the common situation that plays out, parents are hesitant to involve children without disabilities in future planning for the individual with a disability.³

**What to talk about:**
- Residential Plans
- Future Caregiver
- Legal Guardianship
- Letter of intent
- Financial planning
  - Estate Planning

**Always discuss your plans with your sibling!**

**NATIONAL RESOURCES**

**Sibling Support Project**
The Sibling Support Project is a national organization committed to supporting siblings of individuals with special health, developmental, and mental health needs. The Sibling Support Project hosts online communities for young siblings, teen siblings, and adult siblings.

**SibNet Listserv – For Adult Siblings**
A place for adult brothers and sisters of individuals with special health, developmental, and emotional needs to share information and discuss everyday issues.

**Sibling Leadership Network**
A national organization providing siblings information and support to help and advocate alongside their brothers and sisters.

**SpecialCareSM Program**
This is a program, developed by MassMutual, that provides useful information for individuals caring for a person with a disability or other special needs. It is an outreach initiative that can help ensure proper life care planning for the future of your sibling.

**LOCAL RESOURCES**

**ACHIEVA**
www.achieva.info
An organization providing comprehensive services and supports for people with disabilities and their families. The organization includes advocacy, training, education, trust services, or other services to the Greater Pittsburgh Area.

711 Bingham Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15203
(412) 995-5000

**Family Services of Western PA**
www.fswp.org
Family services aim to assist individuals in living the most productive lives possible while benefiting their home communities. Provides programs for people with disabilities, including outpatient services, adult living education, crisis intervention, family counseling, financial counseling, vocational and psychosocial rehabilitation, and volunteer-based supports for older adults.

6401 Penn Ave # 2
Pittsburgh
(412) 661-1681

**Easter Seals Western Pennsylvania**
www.westempa.easterseals.com
2525 Railroad Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4608
412-281-7244
800-587-3257 toll free

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Disability Funders Network Website (2009), Disability Stats and Facts.

