How to Strengthen the Bond With Your ADHD Sibling

by BECKY WICKS

Life With an ADHD Sibling

Having a sibling can be a challenge for all of us, and this situation can be exacerbated if one or more of you has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

If you have an ADHD sibling, you may feel frustrated at times, but it's important to realize you can play a vital part in helping your sibling succeed and realize their full potential.

There may have been a lot of resentment growing up; you may have felt that parental attention was unequally divided and that you were marginalized or ignored.

They may have felt as though you were able to do everything "better" than them, and there may have been resentment on their side, too.

It is important to try and let this go and move on, especially in adult life. Resentment and negative feelings will only hold your relationship back.

Try to talk through this resentment, paying close attention to what the other one says, and you may be able to see things from the other perspective. As we grow older we become more flexible in our approach to arguments, and looking back you may realize you could have done something differently.

Apologize

You may feel as though things were not your fault, or that you have nothing to apologize for, however by taking this route you will only create further distance between you and your sibling. Take the initiative by starting with something small — and then you can build on apologies together from there.

Show Them You Care

Showing you care or showing ADHD sibling support is important in all ADHD relationships and could be especially important if you have a sibling with ADHD. This could be something as simple as kind words and a hug, or taking them on a trip somewhere. It does not matter what age you are; there is always something you can do to show you care.

Listen to Them

Listening is a skill we all must learn through life, and is something that could be remarkably beneficial in building your relationship with your ADHD sibling. Listen to what they have to say, whether it is about school/work struggles, or something about the past.

Listen and see what you can do to help. For example, you could help them go through some targets at work, or you could listen to their perspective on something that has happened recently.

Help Them Reach Their Goals

Studying and concentration is one of the most difficult aspects of having a diagnosis of ADHD, and is something your sibling is likely to have struggled with in the past. They will be feeling pressure from all sides to perform and gain better grades, so you could provide a different kind of support.

Do not push them with their schoolwork or their office targets, but rather motivate them, and be there alongside them for all the achievements. Set small targets and create rewards as you go for each milestone.

Spend Time Together

Spending time just with them will be a valuable asset in bringing you closer together. Making time for your sibling — even if it is only an hour a week — can help bring you into a much better place in your relationship.

Encourage your sibling to have a look at some self-help books to help them learn better coping skills for many situations. You could even have a look at one together and see if there’s anything you could do as a team.

Boost Their Self-Esteem

Everyone needs a self-esteem booster every now and then, and this may even be more so in those with ADHD as low self-esteem and ADHD can be connected. Help your sibling realize their strengths and expand on them, as it may help them achieve greater things in the future.

Overcoming weaknesses could also be a target, as you could treat these as a challenge rather than a specific weakness.

It may be that you only find a couple of the points mentioned above useful, or it may be that all of them combine to help bring you closer to your ADHD sibling. Above all, it is important to realize patience is an asset you will find unbelievably helpful in this journey you are making together.

It is likely to be hard at times, but following these steps and working closely with professionals and the rest of your family will ensure a much healthier and stronger relationship for the future.