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# Someone knows

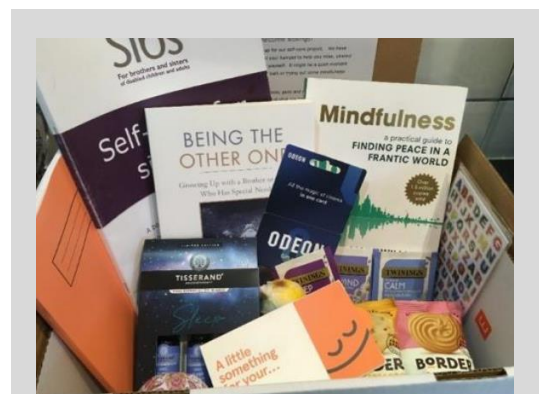
## Summary report: A respite project for adult sibling carers of autistic people

In March 2022, Sibs received a grant from Carers Trust to run a respite project for adult siblings of autistic people, in collaboration with University College London's Group for Research in Relationships and NeuroDiversity.

### The respite project

We wanted to provide a range of options to meet the needs of siblings in different circumstances. The options were:

- **The wellbeing retreat.** 20 siblings attended a weekend retreat in the midlands, offering yoga, mindfulness, creative workshops and sibling support sessions.
- **The discovery course.** 18 siblings attended an 8-week online course, including creative writing, clay, laughter yoga, life coaching, mindfulness and painting.
- **The self-care project.** 20 siblings were sent a self-care hamper to help them explore their wellbeing at their own pace.



Above: Self-care hamper

Sibs is the UK charity for brothers and sisters of disabled children and adults.

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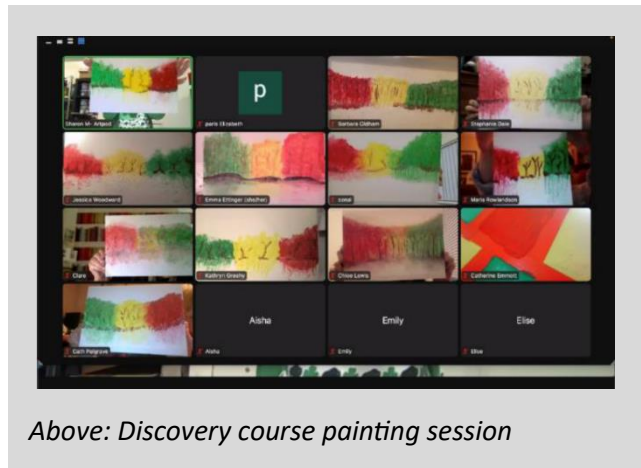
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## Aims

Our aims were to:

- Relieve isolation
- Improve siblings' confidence and skills
- Promote self-care and wellbeing
- Offer practical tools for siblings to take better control of their wellbeing and lives.



*Above: Discovery course painting session*

## Key themes

- **Connection.** Siblings connected with each other, with Sibs and the Carers Trust. This was vital as many siblings reported feeling isolated.
- **Acceptance.** The project gave siblings permission to accept support and learn new ways of managing their own wellbeing.
- **Self-care.** We recognised how much siblings need and how this often goes unacknowledged, both by the sibling themselves and those around them.
- **Being taken care of.** Many siblings commented on how much they valued being noticed and looked after. Siblings are often the ones providing the care, not receiving it.
- **Expectations.** Many siblings told us that their expectations of the project were greatly exceeded. It is a pattern for many siblings that their expectations of help and support are low.
- **Participation.** Siblings not only registered, but they engaged with activities outside of their comfort zone. For many this took a great deal of courage.
- **Identity and belonging.** For some this was the first time they had met with other siblings or engaged in a sibling-only project. Many participants placed value on being with other siblings who had an autistic brother or sister.
- **Lasting impact.** Many siblings have told us they've continued to keep in touch with each other or that they're continuing to use some of the new skills they learnt.

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## Conclusion

The respite project was desperately needed, as most of the applicants had never received any form of respite before. Many reported feeling lonely and isolated prior to taking part. Siblings in all three projects reported an increase in wellbeing and an increase in confidence in taking care of their wellbeing. The increase was most pronounced for siblings who joined the wellbeing retreat.

## Sibling feedback

**The wellbeing retreat:** *"It was an amazing, uplifting, unifying weekend that allowed me to instantly connect with people that were the family, tribe, support network that just got me."*

**The discovery course:** *"Being a sib has left us feeling sad and stressed at times. This course gave us a collective 'downtime'. It can be tough, but we are strong. Fortified by 'Discovery'. Thankyou."*

**The self-care hamper:** *"The Sibs Handbook that was also in the hamper has helped me so much! I can relate to lots of the information and it has helped me to feel more understood and less alone. It is the first time that I have had any information and advice that is specifically for siblings and it made me feel heard."*



Above: Wellbeing retreat clay session (left) and group discussion (right)

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