

## What if your brother/sister doesn't want support?

1. **Many of us worry about our brothers or sisters** when it seems like they don't want to ask for or accept support that we think would be helpful to them. We are also stressed by the ways that **the work of informal support has become a habit** in our families – when our brothers or sisters and/or parents are resistant to bringing in outside support.
2. **There may be different reasons behind our brothers or sisters' reluctance to engage with support.** It can be difficult to tell what the deeper reasons are underneath (or at the core of) a request for help or a dismissal – but it can also be really helpful when we figure out what those wants or roadblocks are.
  - a) **These might be social or identity-based.** People don't always want to think of themselves as needing support. Sometimes, it might help to frame the support in a different way – wouldn't this be so convenient? (Might you try out using a cleaning service or grocery delivery "together" for a month or so?)
  - b) **They might also be related to executive function or social anxiety.** What seems like a relatively simple task for us might involve really daunting steps for someone else. (Is there anything that you can do to help them get started or to eliminate / address some of the "pinch points" in the process?)
  - c) **Sometimes, the person asking makes all the difference,** and it can help to bring in a more "neutral" third party. (That could be a friend, a different family member, or a social worker / care manager doing a care assessment.)
3. **Especially if our sisters or brothers have been diagnosed later in life, they might have mixed or negative feelings about their autism diagnosis.** It can be difficult to know how to support them in this journey, but it helps to be aware that this might be a barrier towards wanting to access support.
4. **Many of us rely on our wider social networks of friends and family to support us when we are struggling.** We worry that our brothers or sisters might not have these same social support networks – or that we *are* their social support networks, which can feel like a lot of pressure.
5. **It's important to remember to set boundaries and advocate for our own needs,** even (or especially) if we know how much our sisters or brothers are depending on our support. Pushing our own limits of time, energy, or patience is **not sustainable**, but it can be difficult to prioritise our own wellbeing when someone we love needs support.
  - a) The Sibs guides to [Coping with Managing Care](#) and [Self-Care for Siblings](#) can both be useful resources to help us with this.
6. **There may be extreme cases where our brother or sister's choice not to engage with services leads to serious harm to their health.** For example, if they continually self-neglect their personal care. Sometimes in these cases, a mental capacity assessment can be requested to determine whether they can fully understand the long-term consequences of declining the support offered, and if they can't, then a support plan may be put in place in their best interests.
  - a) Read more about mental capacity in [Sibs guide to Decision-Making](#)
  - b) [Read Kate's story](#): "My brother was studying online for a master's degree and as he can only focus on one big thing at once, he couldn't organise himself to find another place to live and wouldn't go to the council or accept help from anyone."