

Tennessee Adult Brothers and Sisters (TABS)

Vanderbilt Kennedy Center

<https://www.facebook.com/tabs.siblings>

<http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/vkc/tabs>

Our reasons.....



Sherri and Leonard's Story

- Role as caregiver: Parents and Leonard, then Leonard
- Role as sister: shared activities
- Leonard's needs
- Other sibling needs
- Sherri's needs

Sherri's Perspective: A Sibling in Need of Respite

- Sherri's definition of respite: changing, fluid
- Could be a partner, not a surrogate (someone to go to doctor's with her, push a wheelchair, be with Leonard while she fills out paperwork)
- The gift of time
- The gift of support
- Respite can be momentary...and can be simply presence
- What is needed is *ALWAYS* a work in progress....

Alicia's and Robert's Story

- Role as caregiver: Co-caregiver, provider of respite, caregiver to parents and Robert, now to parents
- Role as sister: shared activities
- Robert's needs
- Other sibling needs
- Alicia's needs

Alicia's Perspective: Siblings providing respite

- Alicia's definition of respite: changing, fluid, family dynamics, shifting expectations of caregiver vs sibling/daughter duties
- Could be time, tasks, activities, blurred lines between family time and respite time, gray area between respite to parents and caring for parents
- Sibling differences: to each his/her own (talents, time, etc), be willing to ask
- The gift of time: spa moments, evenings
- The gift of support: importance of legal documents
- Respite can be needed for a moment or for a day and as a sibling provider it is 24/7 on call
- What can be provided and what is needed is ALWAYS a work in progress....
- Documentation and Timing: Legal documents to be able provide respite,
- Remembering/Reminding of family (laughing, activities, being together), time with parents as parents, siblings as siblings.
- Providing respite doesn't necessarily mean taking charge

It's Different...and It's the Same

For siblings, respite can be...

- A gift of time, a gift of presence, a gift of activity or task
- A reminder to take spa moments,
- An understanding that there is a difference between providing physical care and providing management support...and they are both equally significant.
- A sharing of information, whether it be resources or experiences, and staying in the loop.
- A simple recognition that it's okay to just be you...you were/are a child of the same parents, and a brother or sister long before you even knew what the word respite meant.
- An acknowledgment that there is no right way, only a way
- Fish bowl

REMEMBER: Asking for help is an indication of strength and wisdom. Whether you are in need of respite or providing respite, making a direct request can make a huge difference around expectations. If you need respite, what to you need and when? Is the request ongoing or one time? If you are providing respite, similar questions can help to clarify roles and can help you to know what to offer (ex: train ride). Stability and consistency are critical both to those who need respite and those who are providing it.

REMINDER: As a sibling provider of respite and as a sibling in need of respite, you are still a member of a family. Take time to be family however good or bad or challenging.....

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