My Sibling Experience

Gina O’Brien
We grew up in Australia.
CHALLENGES GROWING UP

- Feeling embarrassment in public
  - Yelling, tantrums, swearing, kicking dogs, breaking things
  - Some people would stare or laugh
- Stress/ anxiety
  - There was shouting and noise in the house – I would hide
  - Worrying about my brother’s health and safety
- Taking on responsibility
  - Helping my parents
  - Helping my brother
- No privacy
  - Ashley would invade in my bedroom all the time!
OUR SIBLING RELATIONSHIP NOW

- We have a special bond
- I like to take Ashley out on adventures
- I take care of him when we go out
- I am not embarrassed by him very much (only sometimes!)
- I am proud to talk to people about my brother
LIVING IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

• I miss being together!
• We talk on Facetime
• I worry about him (His health, the pandemic)
• I feel guilty sometimes and responsible to take care of him
**SUPPORT FOR SIBLINGS**

- “Siblings Club”
  - Met twice a month
  - Other children who were siblings
  - 2 adults ran the club
  - Sharing stories about our siblings with other children who would understand
  - We cried, we laughed, we became friends
  - Cooking, acting, playing fun games
  - I felt special being in this club!

- Counseling (therapy)
  - Talking about my feelings and experiences helped me

- Learning about PWS and disability
  - My parents taught me about PWS
  - Learned from attending PWS Family Events
  - Learning about PWS helped me understand my brother

- Special attention from my family away from my sibling
  - Time to enjoy food and fun without it being cut short by my brother having a tantrum
LIFE LESSONS/ VALUES I GAINED AS A SIBLING

• I developed patience
• Being understanding towards other people with disabilities
• I am a good listener
• I try and look at things from other perspectives
• My brother taught me to live in the moment & to be happy about the small things!