



Upopolis Island

Kids' Health Links Foundation

Sibling Island – www.upopolis.com

SIBLING ISLAND IS A SPACE FOR YOUTH TO SAFELY CONNECT ONLINE.

Sibling Island is a private online group within Upopolis for youth aged 13-23 who have a brother or sister with a chronic or critical illness, medical condition, or disability. Research shows that siblings of youth with medical needs ("healthy siblings") are at higher risk for mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, and are more likely to have feelings of loneliness and guilt. Providing spaces for youth to freely express their thoughts and connect with others who are sharing the same feelings has been shown to positively affect the well-being of the healthy youth.

Upopolis' Sibling Island provides:

- A sense of belonging to a safe, secure, private online community so youth can connect with other youth who are sharing the same experiences
- Information about their sibling's diagnosis/condition through age-appropriate and vetted content
- Affirmation via shared experiences with peers
- Easily accessible content that offer tips, activities and resources to help youth cope with the feelings and experiences associated with being a healthy sibling

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SIBLING ISLAND?

- Monitored daily by a Certified Child Life Specialist, a professional with experience and education in supporting youth who are coping with serious situations, and the effects of this on the family
- Fully accessible on any device with internet or data access
- Provides an opportunity to directly connect with other healthy siblings; sharing experiences helps youth process their own feelings and provides them with a sense of control as they support others
- Opportunity to ask a child life specialist questions related to their experience
- Access to programming and group workshops

To refer a youth, visit www.upopolis.com and Click Professionals – Refer a Youth



EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH WITH A SICK SIBLING

Having trouble relating to their friends and peers at school.

Feeling isolated, lonely, guilty, jealous, angry or afraid.

Living with their sibling's condition; fearing they caused it, might catch it, and not fully understanding the diagnosis/condition.

Lacking a "normal" adolescent experience.

Detachment from relationships with parents and the sick sibling.

SIBLING ISLAND BENEFITS

Sibling Island connects youth going through the same experience so they can rely on each other for support.

Youth can write their own posts and blogs, ask questions, and meet other youth via live chat and messaging.

Age-appropriate and vetted information is available for youth to access to learn more about their sibling's condition.

Sibling Island offers a place for youth to share their experiences, defining what the "new normal" is.

Youth can get connected at any point in their sibling's medical journey and access coping tips/activities.

OUTCOMES

Youth feel less isolated and more empowered by connecting with others facing the same experience.

Youth share experiences, helping them to realize their feelings are completely normal and valid.

When youth understand their sibling's condition, they are less likely to have feelings of fear and sadness.

A new sense of normal returns to their life; youth feel more in control.

With a wide variety of resources available, youth can learn how to navigate the changes in their life.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Social support can influence outcomes for youth by addressing isolation, promoting a positive outlook, and helping to reinforce learning. Upopolis and the Sibling Island remove barriers that limit involvement due to location by providing access to a peer support network that is entirely online.

OUTREACH

The Upopolis Sibling Island is a therapeutic modality. Professionals and organizations can offer this platform as a resource to their clients to further support coping. They can also implement it in their practice, allowing them to support their in-person and remote clients in a new way.

