

YOUNG SIBLINGS WORKSHOP

Age: Under 10 years old

Duration: 4 hours

Schedule

15 minutes: Human BINGO

HUMAN BINGO

Supplies Needed:

- Copies of the BINGO sheet (at end of document) for each participant
- Writing utensil for each participant (a choice of a colored marker has always been popular)
- Small token reward as participants finish.
 - We would recommend against sugared rewards
 - Consider, instead, stickers, squish balls, light-up rings, etc.

Lessons learned:

- Participants will get to know each other, particularly names
- Participants will foster personal connections that can set the stage for more sharing later in the workshop

This is a great activity to have brothers and sisters do as they arrive. If you have very young participants, who don't read or write yet, you may want to provide some other games available for them to entertain themselves with.

For this activity, give brothers and sisters a “human bingo board” that has different facts people may have about themselves. Brothers and sisters can use this board and its questions to ask people things about themselves and get to know one another! When someone finds another person who has that fact true for themselves, they write their name on your paper, in that question’s square. You can give this to brothers and sisters as they’re coming in and play with everyone until you’re ready to begin your Workshop. Whoever gets all the blanks filled gets a prize!

For example, here are some human bingo questions:

“Has blue eyes” “Likes to sing in the shower” “Likes Italian food” “Likes baseball” “Can whistle”

As a participant, if I found someone who had blue eyes, they would sign their name on that square on my bingo board. Once I have a *different* name for each question, I win a prize!

5 minutes: Welcome

- Go over bathroom locations, confidentiality, respecting one another

20 minutes: Understanding Down syndrome: Reading a Story

READING A STORY

Supplies Needed:

- A children's book that will prompt conversation about Down syndrome. There are many to choose from. Find your book by clicking [here!](#)

Lessons learned:

- Participants will get to know facts and experiences of Down syndrome
Facilitators should use this activity as an opportunity to teach brothers and sisters about Down syndrome, factually and from practical experience. Participants should use this activity to address some facts, feelings, and difficult moments about Down syndrome. Some important facts can be found in the **Activities for Older Participants** section of this site, specifically in the Jeopardy game. In our Topics sections, you can learn about commonly experienced feelings from brothers and sisters. Facilitators can also use this to begin discussions about brothers' and sisters' individual experiences of having a sibling with Down syndrome.

15 minutes: Sensitivity Game: Gloves and Coins

GLOVES AND COINS

Supplies Needed:

- A pair of mittens for each participant
- Coins

Lessons learned:

- Participants will gain understanding and empathy for their siblings
- The empathy gained here will promote understanding and patience for siblings

For this game, brothers and sisters need to put on a pair of mittens and try to pick up coins. This will help brothers and sisters to understand what some of their siblings may be experiencing in difficulties with fine motor skill development.

10 minutes: BREAK

30 minutes: What makes you Special

WHAT MAKES YOU SPECIAL

Supplies Needed:

- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Writing utensils

Lessons learned:

- Participants have an opportunity to realize what makes them special to encourage themselves, as well as what makes their sibling special to help appreciate them even in the tough times
- Participants will get accurate answers to their questions about Down syndrome that may arise as participants discuss what makes their sibling special.

For these activities, participants may enjoy creating a flower or a turkey (if your workshop happens near Thanksgiving!) or something similar that

allows participants to write on petals, feathers, etc., qualities of themselves and their sibling that make them special. You could choose to have siblings create one flower for themselves and one for their sibling (similar to the similarities and differences activity), or you could have one flower that represents all of the good qualities for the sibling team, so they can see how special they are together.

These special qualities may not always be positive, so be prepared to talk with your brothers and sisters about some of their negative feelings they have about their sibling. For example, someone may say that their sibling's special quality is not having to do the same chores around the house. In that case, you will want to have read our resources for "**feelings of unequal treatment**" on this site, to ensure you are prepared for the discussion.

15 minutes: Feelings- Happy, Mad or Sad

FEELINGS-HAPPY, MAD OR SAD

Supplies Needed:

- Paper or stick puppets
- Writing utensils
- If younger group, have a "feelings board" that can be found here!

Age group: Under 10 years old

Lessons learned:

- Participants will find a new way of expressing and understanding their feelings about their sibling.

- Participants will have the opportunity to talk with other siblings, as well as the facilitator, about their feelings and find ways to help tough situations.

There are a few ways you can do this activity:

1. Help the participants fold a paper into three columns. At the top of each column, make a happy, sad, and mad face. Discuss with the participants when they feel happy, sad, or mad about their sibling with Down syndrome. Do the same for when the brother or sister thinks they make their sibling happy, mad, or sad.

2. Make stick puppets that each represent happy, sad, or mad emotion. Then, use these to help brothers and sisters express what makes them happy, sad, or mad that their sibling does. Do the same for when the brother or sister thinks they make their sibling happy, mad, or sad.

Reassure them that their feelings are normal and okay, using some resources as outlined in the Topics section. Provide some steps for brothers and sisters to take when they're feeling really mad or have a big problem with their sibling. They should always be encouraged to go to their parents and try to look at the situation differently. More specific steps can also be found in the Topics section of this site

45 minutes: MEAL BREAK

- Depending on the time of your 4-hour workshop, make sure to provide snacks, water or lunch

20 minutes: Let's Act it Out!

LET'S ACT IT OUT

Supplies Needed:

- Paper bags, enough for each participant to have two or more, depending on how many children are in the family
- Markers/pens, other things to decorate with, like yarn, glitter, paper cut-outs of glasses, noses, etc.
- Scissors
- Glue

Lessons learned:

- Participants will have the ability to walk through a situation in a way that allows them to gain some validation for their feelings and experiences, as well as learn some practical problem-solving strategies.
- Participants will benefit from the discussion and requisite growth around a particular topic.

Brothers and sisters will be able to make a paper bag hand puppet that represents themselves and another that represents their sibling with Down syndrome (they may want to make another one for another sibling).

Brothers and sisters can act out a good and bad interaction they have had with their sibling. This will encourage brothers and sisters to share in the good and bad experiences they have with their sibling. It will serve as a great jumping off point to launch the group into discussion about brothers' and sisters' experiences that may require some problem-solving, and also ones that require celebration! Facilitators should be prepared to talk about a lot of different situations and feelings; they can prepare by looking through the Topics section of this site!

Another activity that can be done to "act it out," is to have the brothers and sisters act out funny, happy, and/or difficult moments that occur with their friends or with their siblings' friends. This may help address situations that

arise because the brothers' and sisters' friends don't understand Down syndrome that can often be pretty stressful for our brothers and sisters. For example, a brother or sister may act out one of their friends using the '**r-word**'. How do they react? What can they do? What do they feel--are those feelings okay? Or, they may act out their sibling trying to play with friends on the playground, but the other kids don't understand what their sibling is trying to do. How do they feel? How do they handle the situation? Why do other people act this way?

10 minutes: Sensitivity Game: Dot-on-the-Back

DOT-ON-THE-BACK

Supplies Needed:

- Stickers in groups
 - If you have 12 participants, 4 green stickers/princess stickers/etc., 4 red stickers/car stickers/etc., and 4 yellow stickers/monster stickers/etc.
- Index card with disability written on it
- Any extra things to create disability, i.e. blind fold to create blindness

Lessons learned:

- Participants will learn about other disabilities
- Participants will gain empathy for their siblings and others
- Participants will get to know one another, as their teamwork and communication is necessary to successfully complete this activity

In this game, leaders should take stickers of about three different colors that have stuck to them an index card with a certain inability written on it. The stickers and index cards will be put on brothers and sisters, and then

they must assume their particular inability. Some examples are this are the following: not being able to move, not being able to walk, not being able to talk, not being able to see or hear, etc. They must get in groups according to their matching stickers while also acting within their various disabilities as written on the index cards. This is a great game to help brothers and sisters understand what some of their siblings may be experiencing.

10 minutes: BREAK

10 minutes: Sensitivity Game: Switch Hands

SWITCH HANDS

Supplies Needed:

- Depending on what version of this activity...
 - Fork/spoon
 - Writing utensil
 - Ball to kick or throw

Lessons learned:

- Participants will gain understanding and empathy for their siblings
- The empathy gained here will promote understanding and patience for siblings

In this game, brothers and sisters will need to do various tasks using their non-dominant hand. These tasks can be eating, writing their names,

throwing or kicking a ball, etc. This will help brothers and sisters to understand what some of their siblings may be experiencing.

15 minutes: Question Box

QUESTION BOX

Supplies Needed:

- Index cards
- Markers/pens
- Shoe box

Lessons learned:

- Participants will have the freedom to ask questions about Down syndrome and their sibling, specifically, that they may not normally ask
- Participants will get accurate answers to their questions about Down syndrome, learning good facts
- Participants will benefit from the discussion and requisite growth around a particular topic

The Question Box is a great activity that gives brothers and sisters the opportunity to anonymously write any questions they have about their sibling on an index card and drop it into a shoe box or bag positioned in the room. You may want to start with a time to write some questions down at the beginning of the Workshop and then follow up with some designated time throughout the rest of the Workshop. Brothers and sisters should also know that they can write questions throughout the Workshop, outside of the designated times, as well. It will be important to leave the index cards and pencils out for participants to use through the Workshop. At other

times throughout the Workshop, assemble the brothers and sisters into a circle (different circles for each age group). Ask one of the participants to pull a question and read it out loud, and then you can ask for some advice from the other participants. Oftentimes, siblings can help each other and answer their own questions! Other times, you might need to jump in and offer some direction or reflections. Use these questions as opportunities to talk about some larger topics that are important to brothers and sisters. Make sure you create a safe environment so that brothers and sisters feel safe to share their thoughts and ask any questions there that they may have.

15 minutes: Closing Remarks

- Share with them *Benefits of Having a Sibling with Down Syndrome*
- Have them come up with their own list of benefits!
- Go around the room and have participants share their favorite activity or topic

BENEFITS OF HAVING A SIBLING WITH DOWN SYNDROME

There is a long list of all the benefits of having a sibling with Down syndrome. Your sibling will show you things about the world and your life that you never would have learned except through them. We are a special group of people; I can promise you that. Things can be tough; there's no doubt about it. But your sibling will provide you with unconditional love and teachings about yourself and others. Siblings of people with Down syndrome listed the following things as just a few of the benefits they've gotten from being the sibling of someone with Down syndrome.

KEEP IN MIND...

1. Acknowledge the range of feelings that siblings may bring to the workshop.
2. Say what they feel is common—others experience that, too.
3. Give them practical things to do to remedy the situation.

RESOURCES TO CHECK OUT

1. Read up on different Topics to prepare for any questions that may arise!
2. Look under Activities to download worksheets and explore different games.
3. Check out Dr. Skotko & Sue Levine's book *Fasten Your Seatbelt: A Crash Course on Down Syndrome for Brothers and Sisters* for more helpful information

HUMAN BINGO

Has blue eyes	Likes to sing in the shower	Was born in September	Likes Italian food	Likes baseball
Can name a U.S. state that begins with "C"	Can curl his/her tongue	Reads the newspaper in the morning	Has gone fishing	Prefers vanilla to chocolate
Likes winter better than summer	Likes bananas	Has a sister or brother with Down syndrome	Can whistle	Likes pepperoni pizza
Likes to watch scary movies	Likes to swim	Can wink	Is wearing brown shoes	Went to zoo last year
Is the oldest child in the family	Has a cat	Has visited another country	Plays soccer	Can count to ten in another language