



The Sibling's Guide

✿ LOW MOOD

Your sibling and low mood

A warm, honest guide for the brother or sister of someone living with a heavy, lasting low mood: how to carry the load you did not choose, let your own feelings count, and be there without losing yourself.

Who this is for: the brother or sister of someone with a lasting low mood.

Cited: peer-reviewed research, WHO, and Tele-MANAS.

Languages: English, Hindi, Marathi, and Kannada.

Read it free at weave.clinic/family

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✿ WHEN THE HOUSE TILTS

The role you never chose

✿ IN SHORT

When one person in the family carries a heavy, lasting low mood, the whole home quietly rearranges itself around it. You may have taken on a role you never picked, and you may be carrying more than anyone has noticed.

When a brother or sister lives under a low mood that will not lift, the house tilts. Meals go quiet. Plans get cancelled. Your parents watch one child more closely, and the rest of the family bends to fill the gaps. Somewhere in that bending, you may have become the calm one, the fixer, or the one who does not make waves, so your parents have one less thing to worry about.

Nobody handed you that job out loud. You grew into it because someone had to, and you were there. The role you never chose is still a real weight to carry.

A low mood that stays for weeks and changes how someone sleeps, eats, and moves is a health condition, not a bad phase or a bad attitude. Only a doctor can say what is really going on for your sibling. This booklet will not put a label on your brother or sister. It is here to help you understand what you are living with, and carry it a little more lightly.

Not a phase

a health condition

A low mood that lasts for weeks and changes sleep, appetite and energy is something a doctor can help with, not something to wait out.

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✿ IT IS ILLNESS, NOT A CHOICE

Not lazy, not weak, not against you

✿ IN SHORT

A serious, lasting low mood lives in the wiring and the body, not in willpower. Your sibling is not lazy, weak, or doing this to hurt anyone. Separating the illness from the person is the first real relief.

Here is the part that changes how you see everything. A serious, lasting low mood runs in the wiring and the body, not in willpower. Your brother or sister is not lazy, not weak, and not choosing this to make life harder for the family. When getting out of bed looks impossible, that is the illness pressing down, the way a fever presses down, not a decision.

These conditions often run in families. Having a close relative with low mood raises the chance for others, but a raised chance is not a certainty, and most relatives never develop it. So this is not a curse on your family, and it is not written into your future either.



The day I understood he could not lift it, instead of would not, I stopped reading every cancelled plan as proof that he did not care about us.

A sister, 19

When your sibling withdraws, cancels plans, or snaps at you, that is usually the illness pulling them inward, not a message about how they feel about you. Separating the condition from the person helps more than almost anything else: you can be frustrated with the illness and still love your brother or sister. Both can be true at once.

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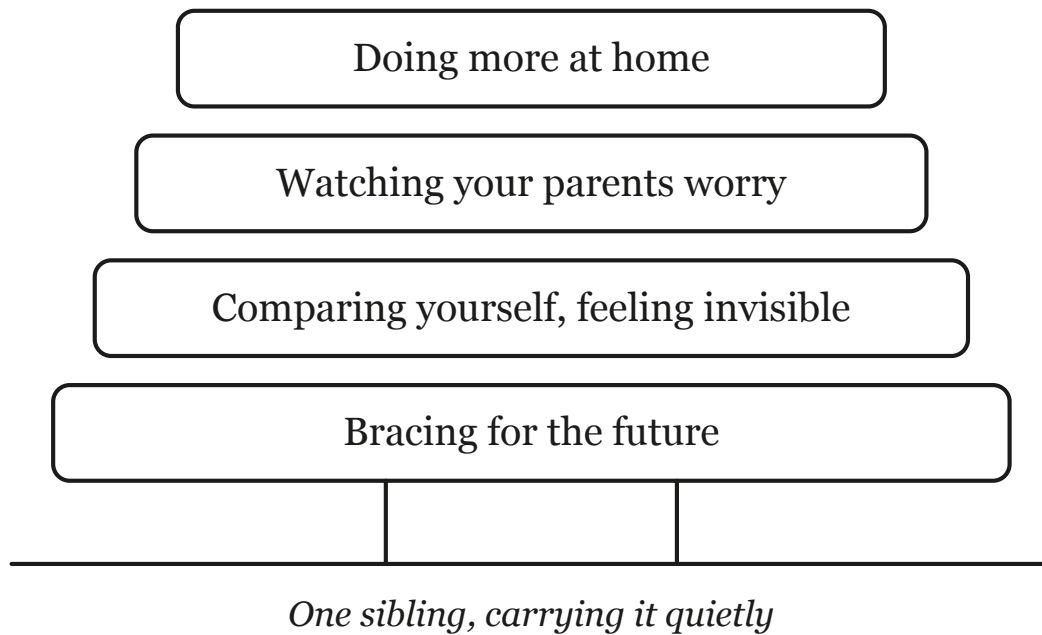
✿ THE LOAD YOU CARRY

What sits on your shoulders

✿ IN SHORT

You may be doing more at home, watching your parents worry, or growing up faster than your friends. Naming this load is not selfish. It is honest, and it is the first step to carrying it better.

You may be doing more at home than your friends can imagine. Watching your parents worry. Growing up faster, taking on jobs that used to belong to the adults. Naming this load is not selfish, it is honest, and honesty is where relief starts.



The load a sibling often carries, quietly, on one pair of shoulders. Naming each weight is how you begin to share it.

Doing more at home than your friends do.

Watching your parents worry, and worrying for them.

Comparison that leaves you feeling invisible or guilty.

Bracing for a future you did not sign up for.

Comparison hurts on both sides. You may feel invisible when the attention goes to your sibling, and then feel guilty for doing well while they struggle. Both feelings are ordinary, and neither makes you a bad brother or sister.

Many siblings quietly brace for the future too, wondering who will look after their brother or sister later, when parents are older or gone. That worry is real, and it deserves to be said out loud to someone, not carried alone in the dark.

 REMEMBER

You are the sibling, not the doctor and not the carer of last resort. It is not your job to fix a health condition on your own. Loving someone and being responsible for curing them are two very different things, and only the first one is yours to carry.

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★ YOUR FEELINGS COUNT TOO

Guilt, grief, and everything between

★ IN SHORT

Guilt, resentment, sadness, and even relief when they are away can all live in the same heart. None of these make you a bad sibling. Your wellbeing is not a luxury the family has to earn.

Guilt, resentment, sadness, and even relief when your sibling is away can all live in the same heart at the same time. None of these feelings make you a bad sibling. They make you a person who is carrying something heavy, honestly.

Grief is allowed too. You are allowed to miss the brother or sister you knew before the low mood settled in, the one who laughed easily or joined in without effort. Missing them is not disloyalty. It is love feeling the shape of what has changed.

figure

label

Steady warmth

Your wellbeing

helps the most

is not a luxury

How the family responds matters more than it feels like in the moment. Steady warmth helps more than criticism or walking on eggshells, and constant tension can make hard days harder for everyone. You do not have to hide your own struggles to protect the family. Your wellbeing is not a luxury the family has to earn first.

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✿ BEING THERE WITHOUT LOSING YOURSELF

Small, steady, and still yours

✿ IN SHORT

Small, steady presence beats grand rescues. You can care and still keep your own life. Boundaries are not abandonment, they are what let you keep showing up.

Small, steady presence beats grand rescues every time. Sitting with them without fixing anything, a short walk, or a simple message often helps more than advice or a pep talk. You do not have to say the perfect thing. Just being there, lightly and often, is the help.

You can care and still keep your own life, your friends, your studies, your rest.

Boundaries are not abandonment, they are what let you keep showing up. You are allowed to say no, to have days off, and to hand things back to your parents or other adults when the weight is too much for you alone.

Presence over rescue.

Sit with them, walk, or send a short message. You do not need the perfect words, only steady company.

Keep your own life.

Friends, studies, and rest are not selfish. A rested you is a better brother or sister, not a worse one.

You can say no.

Days off and limits are allowed. Handing things back to the adults is not letting anyone down.

Learn together.

When the whole family learns about the condition, the weight spreads out instead of sitting on one person.

Learning about the condition together, as a family, spreads the weight so it does not all sit on you. When everyone understands what is happening, the job stops being one person's secret burden and becomes something the family shares.

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✿ GETTING HELP, FOR THEM AND FOR YOU

Where the help is

✿ IN SHORT

Treatment works, and family support is part of what helps someone recover. Encouraging your sibling toward a doctor is worth it, and there is free help every day for them and for you.

Treatment works. Support from family is part of what helps someone with low mood recover, so gently encouraging your sibling toward a doctor is genuinely worth it, not just wishful thinking. You do not have to convince them alone, and you do not have to be the one who fixes it. Getting them to someone who can help is the win.

Some warning signs need help now, not later. Take these seriously: talk of dying or of being a burden, giving away belongings, or a sudden calm after a very dark stretch. If your sibling may not be safe, do not leave them alone, quietly remove easy access to anything they could use to harm themselves, and reach a trusted adult or a doctor straight away.

 FREE HELP, ANY DAY

Tele-MANAS is free, confidential, and open every day. Call 14416 (or 1-800-891-4416) for support, whether it is for your sibling or for you. In an emergency, call 112 or go to the nearest hospital. You are allowed to use these lines for yourself, not only for them.

You deserve support too. Talking to a counsellor, a trusted teacher, or your own doctor is a strength, not a failure, and the burden a sibling carries is real and shared by many, not a private weakness of yours. Carrying this has cost you something. Letting someone help you carry it is how you keep going, and keep being the brother or sister you want to be.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

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FURTHER READING

- WHO: Depression, key facts and where to find help

This guide helps you recognise and understand. It is not a diagnosis. For that, see a professional.

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- Feeling like it is all too much? **Read the crisis card.** Help is one page away.