TARA CONLEY, M.A.

Siblings as Partners

Strengthening Family Engagement and Behavioral Health Across the Lifespan

Founder and Director
Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters (S.I.B.S.)

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PURPOSE

Our network, Iowa's work and I-PAC

S.I.B.S. Network	Who we are, whom we support and what we do
Iowa Workgroup	How partners are developing sibling support across Iowa
I-PAC connection	Shared interests in family well-being and systems planning

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S.I.B.S.

Introducing the S.I.B.S. Network

Who we are
Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters, founded in 2007

Whom we support
Siblings of people with disabilities across the lifespan

Our purpose
Peer support, information and connection across the lifespan

A sibling-led Illinois organization sharing experience as Iowa connections grow.



Community connection — S.I.B.S. website

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SIBLING-TO-SIBLING CONNECTION

Peer support is at the heart of S.I.B.S.

Shared experience	Siblings connect with people who understand the sibling experience.
Space to be heard	A place to share stories, mixed feelings and practical knowledge.
Mutual support	Voluntary relationships built on listening, respect and choice.

Peer connection and education complement professional behavioral health care.

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NATIONAL SIBLING CONNECTIONS

The Sibling Leadership Network (SLN)

National network	Connects siblings and sibling supporters across states.
Information and tools	Shares lifespan resources, education and leadership opportunities.
Advocacy	Promotes issues important to people with disabilities and families.

S.I.B.S. is the Illinois chapter of SLN. **siblingleadership.org**

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S.I.B.S. PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

What sibling support looks like

Young siblings

Sibshops, age-appropriate information and peer connection

Adult siblings

Gatherings and opportunities to share lived experience

Future planning

SIBSReady tools, family conversations and preparation

Grief and voice

Sibling grief resources, education and advocacy



Young siblings — S.I.B.S. website

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IOWA SIBLING SUPPORT WORKGROUP

Building connections across Iowa

Purpose

Bring siblings, families and partners together

Identify gaps and existing supports

Strengthen sibling voice across the lifespan

Current development work

Organizing an Iowa resource guide

Developing collaboration agendas

Exploring leadership and education opportunities

A developing collaboration with a statewide vision.

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WORKGROUP PRIORITIES

Four priorities guiding the Iowa work

Sibling voice	Elevate sibling leadership and meaningful participation
Family support	Strengthen family supports and system coordination
Peer connection	Expand social, emotional and peer supports
Information	Build awareness and access to useful resources

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WORKGROUP INITIATIVES

The workgroup's next steps

Leadership Circle	Explore representation, partner roles and sibling leadership
Resource Hub	Organize age-specific resources and an Iowa directory
Quarterly calls	Plan regular updates, shared priorities and action steps
Webinars	Plan two child-focused sessions and one lifespan session

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GET INVOLVED

Engaging siblings in Iowa

Connect	Join the SIBS Iowa Facebook group for connection and updates.
Share your voice	Identify siblings interested in committees or advisory groups.
Join the workgroup	Help identify people who want to build sibling support in Iowa.

Interested? Connect with Tara: info@sibsnetwork.org

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INTERSECTION WITH I-PAC

Where our work connects with I-PAC

Family well-being	Sibling stress, isolation, grief and changing family roles
Family engagement	Sibling perspectives alongside other lived experiences
Systems planning	Resource access, care transitions and coordination

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SIBLING WELL-BEING

A place for the sibling's own needs

Recognition	Space to talk about mixed feelings and uncertainty
Connection	Information and voluntary contact with other siblings
Appropriate care	Connections to qualified professionals when needed

Peer support and education complement professional behavioral health care.

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INCLUSIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Sibling involvement begins with choice

Person receiving care	Whom do you want involved, and how?
Sibling	What role, if any, do you want and have capacity for?
Support team	What can we share, and how will communication work?

Willingness, availability and authority are separate questions.

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CARE TRANSITIONS AND SYSTEMS PLANNING

A shared interest in continuity of support

Aging parents	Document knowledge and discuss future roles before an emergency.
Changes in services	Clarify contacts, appointments and who follows up.
Crisis or loss	Identify backup supports and offer support to the sibling.

The person's preferences guide continuity. Responsibility requires agreement.

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OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

Where I-PAC's perspective could help

Shared learning
Identify overlaps with existing family and peer-support efforts.

Resource connections
Help identify useful behavioral health information and partners.

Sibling voice
Explore appropriate listening and advisory opportunities.

A conversation about alignment, connections and practical next steps.



Advocacy and sibling voice — S.I.B.S. website

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DISCUSSION

Siblings as partners in Iowa

Where does our work connect with I-PAC?

Resources we should know about
Partners and voices we should include

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