



# Working together for siblings



Foto: Fotolia/Sonya Etchison



## Joint Project

### Alliance for Siblings

**The Institute of Social Medicine in Paediatrics Augsburg (ISPA), the Network for Siblings, and the Novartis FamilyTies Foundation joined together to form an „Alliance for Siblings“ in the autumn of 2015. The objective: to put in place a strategically co-ordinated procedure to drive forward the expansion of a sustainable care structure.**



The needs of siblings for preventive and sustainable support to stabilise their development are considerably higher than the present offers provided by the existing healthcare system. The number of offers for siblings with the widest possible range of approaches and settings continues to grow. But these will remain unstable as long as they are financed purely by donations or funding programmes with pre-defined time limits.

This explains why reimbursable group offers will play an increasingly important role in the future. From the point of view of the Alliance for Siblings, standardised, modular care programmes that can be transferred to various settings are the right approach for satisfying the needs validly in the long

term. The prospects of reimbursement by statutory health insurers are good. As the first step, the members of the alliance want to work together on the consensual, systematic and nationwide German roll-out of the modular group programme „SiblingsCLUB“ in 2016.

The Alliance for Siblings is not an exclusive club, but is rather open to more partners. All the organisations involved will retain their own core, and thus contribute to the variety of care for siblings. For the FamilyTies foundation this means: besides focussing on the standardised group offers, we will be concentrating on expanding the nationwide network to create a „Colourful Map of Germany“ with a wide variety of low-threshold offers in 2016 and the coming years.

## Editorial

### Dear friends of FamilyTies,

2015 has been an important and successful year for working with siblings in Germany. Public interest is growing exponentially, the network with offers is ever more tightly-knit. The strategic alliance between FamilyTies, ISPA and Network for Siblings is a particularly significant milestone since it offers the outstanding chance of getting standardised and transferable group offers permanently anchored in the healthcare system. We are convinced that there is still a long way to go, and it will be far better to pull together rather than have everybody wandering off in different directions. To quote: „Together for Siblings“. We are looking forward to the publication of a family-oriented advisory concept in February 2016, that the universities of Münster, Hamburg Eppendorf and Leipzig have developed with our support. Since this can be used in various settings, it can be a valuable add-on, e.g. for institutions or self-help organisations that want to focus on work with siblings without having to set up a group offer. Allow us to conclude with a point that greatly concerns us at present. We are wondering whether the instruments that are so helpful for siblings could be transferred to other groups as well, e.g. refugees.

We wish you a very merry Christmas and a good start to the New Year.

Together for Siblings!



**Adib Jacob**  
Chairman of the  
Novartis Foundation  
FamilyTies



**Irene von Drigalski**  
Managing Director  
Novartis foundation  
FamilyTies

## Practice Manual

### The SiblingsFORUM „Now it's MY turn“!



The preventive programme SiblingsFORUM „Now it's MY turn“! is a core offer for supporting siblings aged 7 to 14 years. The aim is to strengthen resilience and promote the mental health of siblings of chronically ill, severely ill and/or children with special needs. The SiblingsFORUM „Now it's MY turn“! is one of the first offers for siblings in Germany that can be invoiced via statutory health insurers.



The manual explains the psychological principles, the concept, and the evaluation of the course. It is centred on instructions on how to benefit from the programme, and work material for practical implementation.

The manual stems from the close co-operation between the Federal Association „Bunter Kreise e.V.“/ISPA and the „Verbund für Geschwister“ [Siblings Association]. It is the essence of the two concepts for supporting siblings, the Federal Association Bunter Kreis e. V. (SiblingsCLUB – offer SiblingsFORUM) and the Siblings Association („Now it's MY turn“!). It combines the most important topics as the core offer of a single programme. The SiblingsFORUM „Now it's MY turn“! has a modular structure, so it can be used in different settings, e.g. free time activities lasting several days, weekly courses, or in compact courses lasting just a few days.

The manual consists of 4 parts:

- ★ Part 1 explains the theoretical rationale behind the offer. It describes siblings' special situation in life and the theoretical concepts behind the programme.

- ★ Part 2 describes the aims and the historical origin of the programme and its care concepts.
- ★ Part 3 sheds more light on the principles and framework conditions of the offer.
- ★ Part 4 makes up the main topic of the manual. Here you will find detailed instructions on how to use the 9 modules of the SiblingsFORUM as well as work material for practical implementation. The manual comes with a CD containing all the necessary work sheets, audio files, and templates for the various materials.



The young dragon Ramga serves as the identification figure for the specific subjects and needs of siblings.



Order from the  
Bundesverband  
Bunter Kreis e.V.  
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info@  
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## Book reviews

**Title:** Der GeschwisterTREFF „Jetzt bin ICH mal dran!“  
[The SiblingsFORUM „Now it's MY turn“!]  
**Authors/Publishers:** Thore Spilger, Christa Engelhardt, Kerstin Kowalewski and Florian Schepper  
**Illustrator:** Cornelius Weiß  
**Price:** 85 Euro





## Winners of the 2015 Promotional Award

### It's your turn!

**The association „Room for Siblings“ (VRG) in Switzerland has been working on the platform [www.dubistdran.ch](http://www.dubistdran.ch) where qualified suppliers can publish their offers for siblings since 2013. The Swiss equivalent of the FamilyTies foundation, that is run entirely by volunteers, was awarded the 2015 FamilyTies promotional award for its work.**

The website presents a compilation of existing offers that are not widely known to the general public, and gives details of multipliers. The offers are classified according to region, age and gender of the children and young adults, which makes it easier for those affected and for other sponsors to find what they are looking for. Conversely, sponsors can also upload their own offers.

„Our goal is to help siblings with their special childhood and background, strengthen their resources and potentials and swap news and views“, said Martina Dumelin, the project leader. „Another aim is to give interested people access to more information so they can network with other sponsors and contact points. In 2016 we plan to organise our own specific offers“.

Thanks to the offers available the children can use appreciative space to

develop and live out their joy of living to help them develop individually for the sake of their health. The offers published by the VRG are inspected for compliance with the requirements of Swiss prevention in public health and the charter for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

#### Key data

**Established:** 2013  
**Target group:** Siblings aged 5 to 18 and young adults  
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[www.dubistdran.ch](http://www.dubistdran.ch)

## FORUM

### Note:

Training as „Specialist for Siblings“, that has been developed by the Institute of Social Medicine in Paediatrics Augsburg (ISPA) with the support of the FamilyTies foundation and other partners in the welfare and medical sectors, is a qualification for staff specialising in providing psychosocial support for siblings that empowers them to hold the courses „SuSi“ (Supporting Siblings) and SiblingsFORUM „Now it's MY turn“! (see page 2). Both courses have been certified by the central prevention inspection office. Qualification as a Specialist for Siblings is a precondition for the reimbursability of „SuSi“ and SiblingsFORUM by statutory health insurers. You will find more information here:  
[www.ispa-bunterkreis.de/fort-und-weiterbildungen/fachkraft-fuer-geschwister/](http://www.ispa-bunterkreis.de/fort-und-weiterbildungen/fachkraft-fuer-geschwister/)



## Recommended reading

Marlies Winkelheide

### Dich hatte ich mir anders vorgestellt

[I had imagined you differently]

Fabien Toulme

*A candid and frank description of a family that has to deal with a special child.*



The author, a graphic artist, employs attractive drawings and words to tell his tale through all the phases of expecting a second child, including his fear that the child might be handicapped. He describes his path from denial and desperation to unconditional acceptance of his daughter with Down syndrome. He doesn't leave out a single controversy. Readers learn about the reactions from various doctors, the general public in various countries, and the various social backgrounds in a city. He also includes colleagues' reactions, some of whom were helpless, and describes the support received from grandparents, friends and self-help groups. He also describes how the older sibling reacted, and tells about the parents' question of when they should tell the child about its handicap.

## Winners of the 2015 Promotional Award

### On expedition

**Dealing with feelings and needs is a central theme in work with siblings. The Network for Siblings and Parent Support in Leipzig were awarded the 2015 FamilyTies promotional prize for their project „Discover your feelings“ that is particularly concerned with emotional coping strategies for siblings.**



Parent support for  
children with cancer  
Leipzig



Diagnostic investigations and treatment of a child with a chronic disease place a heavy burden on the entire family. Ambivalent feelings suddenly dictate day to day life, not only of the affected child, but also of his or her brothers and sisters. One of the central protective factors here is the ability to recognise one's own emotions, to evaluate these properly, and to regulate them.

„Our training scheme ‚Discover your feelings‘ is aimed at children with chronic diseases, their siblings and families“, explained Nora Dietrich and Lea Beyer who have developed the training scheme. „We use play and games to convey new strategies for dealing with your own feelings in stressful situations“. The children join in the group programme on a fantasy journey as „Feeling researchers“. After taking off in a biplane they first visit the „Land of feelings“ where they learn to express emotions with facial expression, pantomime, and their bodies.

While they're with the Wukalehsi tribe, a fictitious clan of drummers in Africa, the children make a drum so they can express their feelings musically, learn to become aware of and give voice to their feelings. A situation theatre gives them room to share their own experiences associated with the disease, and gives all the children new alternatives for dealing with emotionally upsetting everyday family situations.

Besides direct work with those affected, workshops and lectures are hosted for specialist staff. These explain the theoretical background behind emotion regulation in childhood, and give practical insights into the playful elements of the „Discover your feelings“ expedition.



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### We value your opinion!

Please let us know what aspects of FamilyTies NEWS-LETTER you have enjoyed or what could have been done better. If you would prefer not to receive the newsletter, please send a brief e-mail to:  
[info@stiftung-familienbande.de](mailto:info@stiftung-familienbande.de)

## Key data

**Established:** May 2011

**Target group:** siblings 4 years old and above

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