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ABSTRACTS FOR WORKSHOPS

N. Sibshop as a Method
(2 hours)

Bennett, Lucy (Ireland)

Lecturer in Family Studies on the Degree in Applied Social Studies in Social Care, at Carlow College, Eire.

Previously worked as Social Worker in an Early Years Centre for Children with Special needs

lhyland@carlowcollege.ie

Working with Siblings of Children with Special Needs

This workshop will consist of a presentation on working with children who have a brother or sister with special needs. Traditionally, focus has tended to be on the individual with special needs and, to some extent, on the impact it has on mothers. The needs of other children in the family were not seen as priority.

The Sibshop model was originally developed by Don Meyer (Meyer, 1995) in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A. for children aged between eight to thirteen years who were siblings of children with special needs. The model has since been used in several countries around the world and has been adapted for use with a greater variety of groups and a broader range of topics.

The aims of Sibshops are:

- to facilitate the children to meet other siblings
- to encourage them to discuss common joys and concerns
- to explore how to handle situations experienced by siblings
- to provide information about special needs

The challenge for the adults running Sibshops is to achieve these aims in a child-friendly, creative and fun manner.

The format of the workshop will involve a brief presentation on “the key concerns and unique opportunities” (Meyer, 1995) that growing up with a brother or sister with special needs entails. Participants will then be invited to take part in the games and activities that typically take place during a Sibshop.