

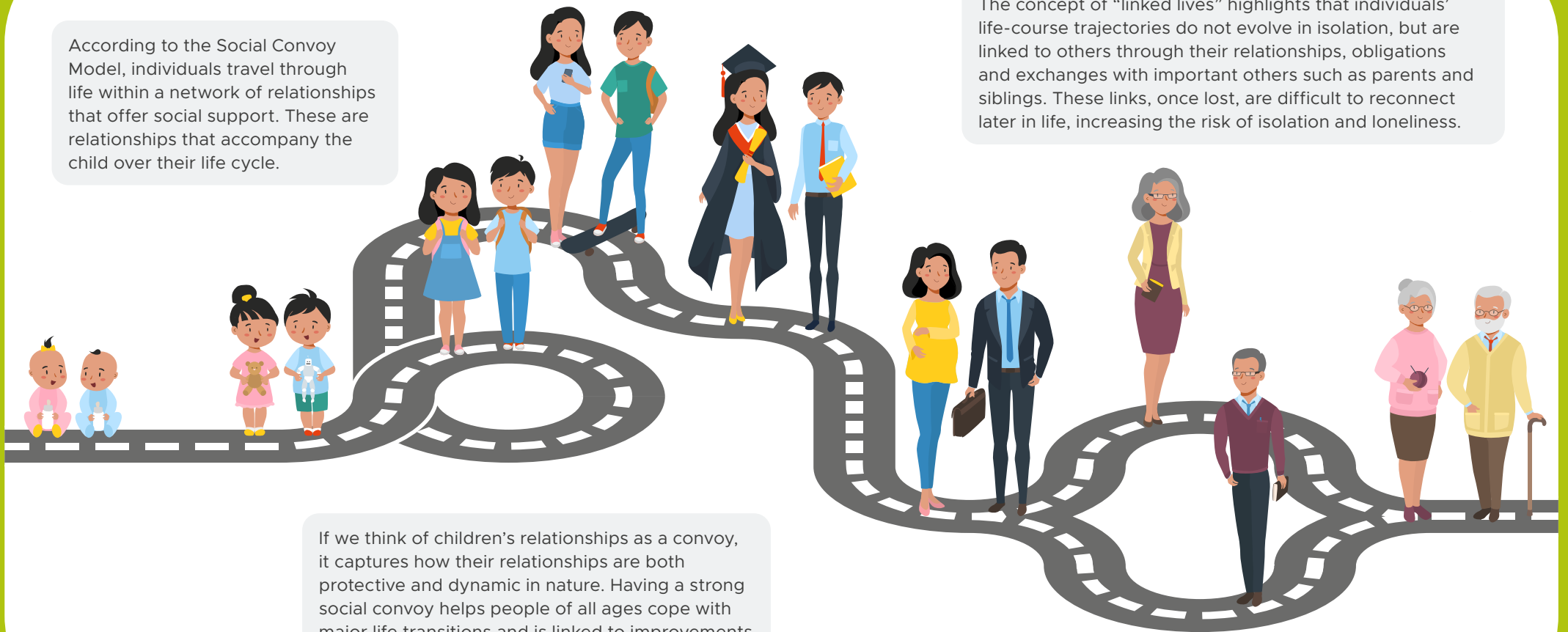
# Linking lives: Helping siblings living apart to be connected

A practical tool for practitioners to promote sibling connections

According to the Social Convoy Model, individuals travel through life within a network of relationships that offer social support. These are relationships that accompany the child over their life cycle.

The concept of “linked lives” highlights that individuals’ life-course trajectories do not evolve in isolation, but are linked to others through their relationships, obligations and exchanges with important others such as parents and siblings. These links, once lost, are difficult to reconnect later in life, increasing the risk of isolation and loneliness.

If we think of children’s relationships as a convoy, it captures how their relationships are both protective and dynamic in nature. Having a strong social convoy helps people of all ages cope with major life transitions and is linked to improvements in overall wellbeing over the lifespan.



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Practitioners, carers and adopters play an important role in assisting children to develop their social convoy and in linking their lives to loved ones, so that they can go through the journey of life with strong networks and supports. This should follow an assessment of suitability and safety.

**Relationships with siblings can be among the most important and long-lasting. Build sibling connections through opportunities to make and share**

Some memories will be happy, some will be painful. Each siblings' memories of their past can be expressed differently depending on their ages. Sharing, clarifying and holding memories with siblings helps strengthen long-term relationships.

**Encouraging shared interests/ recreational activities**  
(e.g. sport, movies)

**Organising meet ups or sleepovers**  
and spending school holidays together

**Communicating**  
through video calls, text messages, social media, online gaming, emails and letters

**Celebrating special occasions together**  
(e.g. birthdays, Diwali, Christmas)

**Sharing cultural activities**  
(e.g. foods, language, celebrating cultural days of significance)