Wondering How To Support a Loved One Who Has Cancer?

Here are some helpful resources for family, friends and caregivers.

In 2022, an estimated 1.9 million people will be diagnosed with cancer in the United States and nearly 40% of women and men will be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetimes.

Research shows that people with cancer need support from family and friends to better deal with challenges and to improve their quality of life.

How can I support someone ...

Newly diagnosed or going through treatment?

Consider offering help with everyday tasks

- Set up a meal scheduling service like Meal Train in partnership with Magnolia to make it easy for people to bring meals. Nutrition is vital to cancer patients undergoing treatment. Meal Train provides a shared online calendar for family, friends and neighbors to schedule and organize meals for people affected by cancer.

- Create an online task calendar so family, friends and neighbors can sign up for visits and help with errands like grocery shopping, lawn care, picking up prescriptions and walking the dog.

- Schedule a cleaning service. Some organizations offer free or reduced-cost cleaning services to cancer patients.

- Volunteer to babysit and/or research childcare assistance for cancer patients.

- Secure transportation to and from appointments. Offer to drive to and from appointments. Local organizations can help set up rides and some organizations, including Mercy Medical Angels, offer gas cards, bus tickets and even airplane travel for treatment-related travel.

Tip: Medical bills can be expensive. Contact the local department of social services for information about financial help for people diagnosed with cancer.

As a caregiver?

- Help research cancer doctors, medical facilities and treatment options based on insurance.

- Help create a list of questions and treatment goals to ask the doctor and volunteer to go along to appointments and take notes.

- Start a binder (or dedicate a drawer) to organize important documents and information about test results, insurance matters, treatment options, etc.

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After treatment ends?

The end of cancer treatment can bring up a mix of emotions and is different for everyone.

- Listen, ask your loved one how you can support them and don’t judge.

- Send fruit, flowers, meals or cards after the initial flood of support stops.

- Plan an activity or offer to bring in take-out, rent a movie or do whatever they will enjoy if your loved one wants to stay in.

- Support the idea of getting help from professionals such as a social worker or therapist.

- Explore options for getting help with finances after cancer.

- Help plan and make other important financial and legal decisions by accessing resources like Magnolia Purpose in Planning.

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