

New Connections

HELPING YOU CARE FOR A LOVED ONE DURING TREATMENT



Issue 12



Caregiver Corner: You've got a friend.

In fact, you probably have a number of friends. And very likely, they're all out there wanting to help you in whatever way they can. It's also likely that they're out there just waiting – waiting to call because they don't want to bother you at this time; waiting to drop by because you might be too busy; waiting because they don't know what to say.

You, on the other hand, may be wanting their companionship and help, but don't want to be a burden. You may want to talk, but don't want to bore them. You can see how a stalemate develops. That's why we offer these tips:

Reach Out to Your Friends Yourself.

For many people, it is just so difficult to pick up the phone the first time to face the painful reality of a friend's life. That's why, although it may seem a little unfair that you should have to be the instigator, you may want to make that first contact yourself. Chances are, you'll be glad you did. Usually, close friends, and even acquaintances, will leap at the chance to talk and to help. And initial contact begets more contact until, soon, you'll find an easy two-way dialog ensuing that will make it easy to accept or ask for help with specific tasks or to simply call and chat.

Don't Forget the Distant Friends.

Even friends who live out of your town, especially old friends, can be supportive and comforting. Long-time friends can be of particular help because of your shared memories and your deep knowledge of one another. It's comforting to talk to someone who knows who you once were as well as who you now are. Sometimes, seeing glimpses of your younger self in your mind's eye can strengthen your emotional reserves for the job before you today. What's more, through validation of the positive past, you can feel more hopeful about the future. Surely, happier times will come again.

Feel Free to Laugh.

When you talk to or visit with friends, let the conversation drift to subjects other than cancer and your caregiver function. Don't feel guilty if you find yourself engaged in talk about work, sports, politics, fashion, or a funny new commercial! Any subject that helps focus your mind on things other than the task before you can have a refreshing, therapeutic effect.

As a Friend Helps You, You Help that Friend.

It's always good to remember that friendship is a two-way street. As one woman said about helping a friend of hers, "To support a friend while she's supporting a loved one is to discover the unique gift you have to offer, and the pleasure is mutual."

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