

HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE WITH CANCER

How to stay close without trying to fix what cannot be fixed

Why this resource exists

People often disappear because they are afraid of saying the wrong thing. Others rush in with advice because silence feels uncomfortable.

Good support is usually simpler: listen, believe the person, offer something specific and keep showing up after the first wave of attention fades.

What often helps

- Ask what kind of support would be useful today
- Offer one specific practical thing
- Listen without comparing their cancer to someone else's
- Let difficult feelings exist without correcting them
- Remember appointments and check in afterwards
- Keep including them without applying pressure

What to avoid

- Unrequested treatment or diet advice
- Telling them to stay positive
- Asking them to reassure you
- Disappearing because you do not know what to say
- Making promises you cannot reliably keep
- Treating every conversation as a cancer conversation

Simple messages that work

I am thinking of you. No need to reply.

I can bring dinner on Tuesday or Thursday. Would either help?

Do you want listening, distraction or practical help today?

I remember your appointment is tomorrow. I will check in afterwards.

**You do not have to make this easier
for me.**

When you get it wrong

A simple apology is enough: 'I think I tried to fix this when you needed me to listen. I am sorry. I am here.'

Use this sheet as a starting point

You do not need to complete every section. Circle one line, write one name, or use one sentence. Small pieces of clarity are enough for today.

Important

This resource offers practical lived-experience support and does not replace medical, psychological, legal or employment advice. Contact your clinical team or emergency services if you are worried about your health or immediate safety.