

supporter roadmap

Supplemental Guide
Communication



TIPS TO IMPROVE EMPATHY AND CONNECTION



Listen Actively

What it looks like:

Listen without interrupting or offering solutions immediately. Let them express their fears, frustrations, or needs in their own words.

Why it matters:

Active listening shows that you respect their feelings and are open to understanding their emotional landscape, even when it's uncomfortable.



Validate Their Feelings

What it looks like:

Acknowledge that their emotions, whether sadness, anger, or anxiety, are valid. Use phrases like, "I can see that you're feeling upset," or "It's okay to be scared."

Why it matters:

They may feel overwhelmed, and validating their feelings helps them feel understood and less isolated.



Encourage Open Conversation

What it looks like:

Ask open-ended questions to allow them to share their thoughts about treatment, their health, and their emotional state. Avoid being judgmental or minimizing their experiences.

Why it matters:

By encouraging openness, you show that you're a safe person to talk to, which can strengthen trust and reduce feelings of isolation.



Respect Their Autonomy

What it looks like:

Let them have a say in decisions about their treatment, lifestyle changes, and social life where appropriate. Even if you don't agree with every choice, respect their need for control.

Why it matters:

Cancer often makes them feel like they've lost control over their lives. Giving them autonomy in areas where they can make decisions fosters independence and self-worth.



Be Emotionally Available

What it looks like:

Be present and available for emotional conversations. If your teen isn't ready to talk, simply being nearby and approachable can make a difference.

Why it matters:

They often deal with their emotions differently from adults. They may not always initiate conversations but still want emotional support from their parents.



Balance Empathy + Optimism

What it looks like:

Show understanding of their struggles, but try to offer realistic hope when possible. Avoid toxic positivity, where everything is framed as "it will all be fine."

Why it matters:

They need to feel heard, and blanket reassurances can come across as dismissive. Offer empathy first, followed by encouragement that reflects the reality of their situation.

TIPS TO IMPROVE EMPATHY AND CONNECTION



Facilitate Peer Support

What it looks like:

Help them stay connected with friends or peers going through similar experiences, either through social media, support groups, or age-appropriate cancer networks.

Why it matters:

They often relate better to peers their age, especially those who share their experiences. This peer connection can reduce feelings of loneliness and provide additional emotional support.



Care for Your Emotional Needs

What it looks like:

Find support for yourself, whether through a counselor, support group, or other parents of children with cancer.

Why it matters:

By managing your own emotions, you can be more present for them and less likely to project your fears, exhaustion, or other stressors onto them.



Practice Patience + Forgiveness

What it looks like:

Some days they might lash out or withdraw. Stay patient and give them space when they need it but also remind them you're there for them when they need you.

Why it matters:

They are navigating complex emotions, and their reactions may not always seem rational. Patience shows that you understand they are going through a difficult time.



Give Them Space

What it looks like:

Allow them to have personal time when they need it. Respect their boundaries and don't push them to talk or engage when they are not ready.

Why it matters:

When dealing with a major illness, they may need space to process their thoughts and emotions. Giving them time alone shows you respect their need to reflect and regain some sense of personal control.



Provide Normalcy

What it looks like:

Encourage your teen to continue with aspects of their normal life where appropriate, such as social activities, hobbies, or schoolwork, within their physical and emotional limits.

Why it matters:

Maintaining a sense of normalcy can help them feel less defined by their illness and more connected to their previous identity. It also helps them focus on the parts of life that are still in their control.



Check-in Without Pressure

What it looks like:

Periodically ask how they're feeling emotionally and physically, but without pressing them if they're not ready to open up.

Why it matters:

Regular check-ins show you care and are available, but giving them control over when they share helps preserve their sense of agency.

COMMUNICATION NEEDS WORKSHEET

This worksheet helps everyone identify their communication needs and preferences, and facilitates more effective communication.



I prefer to talk about my illness when I'm feeling...



When I feel overwhelmed, it helps when you...



I don't like when people say or do...



One thing I'd like to change about how we communicate is...



What I appreciate most in our conversations is...

Example:

I prefer to talk about my illness when I'm feeling...

Calm and not too tired.

When I feel overwhelmed, it helps when you...

Give me some space to calm down before talking.

I don't like when people say or do...

Tell me to "stay positive" all the time, it feels dismissive.

One thing I'd like to change about how we communicate is...

I'd like us to talk more about things other than my illness.

What I appreciate most in our conversations is...

That you always ask me what I want before making decisions.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION WORKSHEET

This worksheet encourages open conversations and identifies areas where communication can improve.



What are three things I appreciate when you do or say them?



What are two things I wish you could say or do differently?



One thing I feel when we talk about my situation is...



A suggestion I have for improving how we talk about difficult topics is...

Example:

What are three things I appreciate when you do or say them?

I like when you ask me how I'm feeling without being pushy, when you remind me it's okay to take things slow, and when you let me decide what I need for the day.

What are two things I wish you could say or do differently?

I wish you wouldn't tell me to "be strong" all the time and wouldn't try to solve every problem for me right away.

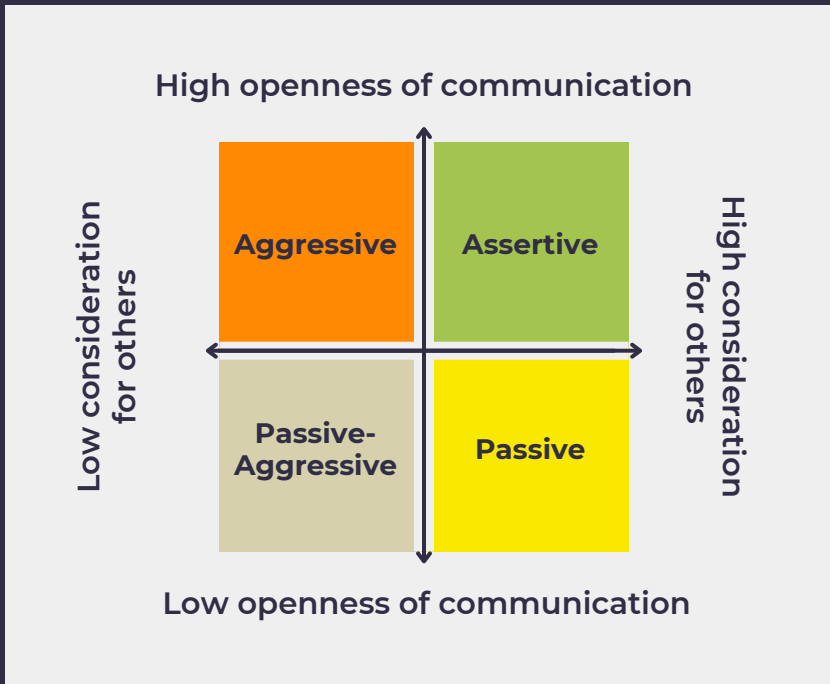
One thing I feel when we talk about my illness is...

Sometimes I feel frustrated, like I don't want to talk about it at all.

A suggestion I have for improving how we talk about difficult topics is...

Maybe we can set aside specific times to talk about the heavy stuff so it's not always hanging over us.

What's Your Communication Style?



Communication is the foundation of human connection, shaping our relationships and interactions. Each of the four common communication styles shown: aggressive, assertive, passive-aggressive, and passive comes with its unique attributes and challenges. Recognizing and understanding these styles in ourselves and others can lead to healthier, more effective interactions, particularly within the sensitive context of a cancer support network.

Aggressive

Emotionally dishonest, indirect, inhibited, self-denying, blaming, apologetic

"I boldly insist that my rights and needs prevail."

Assertive

Appropriately honest, direct, self-enhancing, expressive, self-confident, empathic to emotions of all involved.

"I clearly express that we both have rights and needs."

Passive-Aggressive

Emotionally dishonest, indirect, self-denying at first. Self-enhancing at the expense of others later.

"I subtly make clear that my rights and needs prevail."

Passive

Emotionally dishonest, indirect, inhibited, self-denying, blaming, apologetic

"Others' rights and needs take precedence over mine."

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH DIFFERENT STYLES

- Stay calm and avoid escalation.
- Set clear boundaries.
- Be assertive but not confrontational.
- Avoid engaging in power struggles.

- Be direct and clear.
- Show respect for their opinions while expressing your own.
- Be open to healthy, balanced discussions.

- Address the underlying issues directly.
- Use clear and assertive communication.
- Avoid engaging in sarcastic or passive-aggressive responses.

- Encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings.
- Be patient and provide a safe environment for sharing.
- Avoid taking advantage of their passivity.

Communication Style

Self-Assessment Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to help you identify your predominant communication style(s) and understand how you can use this awareness in your interactions with others.

Instructions:

Read each statement and rate how much it applies to you on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Never, 5 = Always).

Scoring:

If you scored mostly 4s and 5s for statement #

1 - you likely have an **assertive** communication style.

2 - you likely have an **aggressive** communication style.

3 - you likely have a **passive** communication style.

4 - you likely have a **passive-aggressive** communication style

Part 1: Identifying Your Predominant Communication Style(s)

1. I express my needs and opinions openly and respectfully.
2. I often find myself getting angry and raising my voice to get my point across.
3. I tend to avoid conflict and go along with what others say.
4. I sometimes use sarcasm or indirect comments to express my dissatisfaction.

Part 2: Using Your Style Effectively

Based on your predominant style, consider the following tips to enhance your communication.

Assertive:

- Continue to communicate openly and respectfully.
- Help others in expressing their opinions and needs.
- Be aware of becoming too rigid or overbearing.

Passive:

- Practice expressing your thoughts and feelings.
- Work on setting boundaries.
- Gain confidence in valuing your opinions.

Aggressive:

- Practice active listening.
- Focus on maintaining calmness and respect in conversations.
- Work on empathy and understanding others' perspectives.

Passive-Aggressive:

- Aim for direct and honest communication.
- Address issues openly instead of using indirect methods.
- Reflect on the reasons behind your reluctance to communicate directly.

Understanding your communication style and how to interact with others with different styles can improve your personal and professional relationships. This awareness leads to more effective, respectful, and rewarding interactions.



OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS WORKSHEET

This worksheet helps you practice reframing closed yes/no questions with open-ended questions, encouraging deeper conversations and understanding. In addition, it creates opportunities to express emotions in a non-judgmental space, and builds trust and empathy by inviting dialogue rather than ending it.

Examples:

- Closed question: "Did you have a good day?"
 - Open-ended question: "What was the best part of your day today?"
- Closed: "Did your friends visit you today?"
 - Open-ended: "How do you feel about the support you're receiving from your friends?"

Practice Asking Open-Ended Questions

Think about a recent conversation, and reframe a closed question into an open-ended question.

- Closed: "Are you feeling okay?"
 - Open-ended: _____
- Closed: "Do you need my help?"
 - Open-ended: _____

Answering Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions give you the chance to share more about how you're feeling. Practice answering these questions below:

- "What has been the hardest part of this week for you?"
 - Your answer: _____
- "What can I do to support you better?"
 - Your answer: _____

Reflection on Open-Ended Questions

- How did it feel to answer open-ended questions?

Daily Life and Feelings

- What was the best or most challenging part of your day today?
- How have you been feeling emotionally and physically lately?

Coping and Emotional Well-being

- How have you been coping with everything recently?
- What kinds of things have been stressing you out or bothering you lately?

Future Plans and Hopes

- What are you looking forward to doing in the next few days?
- What are your hopes or goals for the future as you continue your treatment?

Social Connections

- How do you feel about the support you're getting from your friends lately?
- What has it been like talking with your friends about what you're going through?

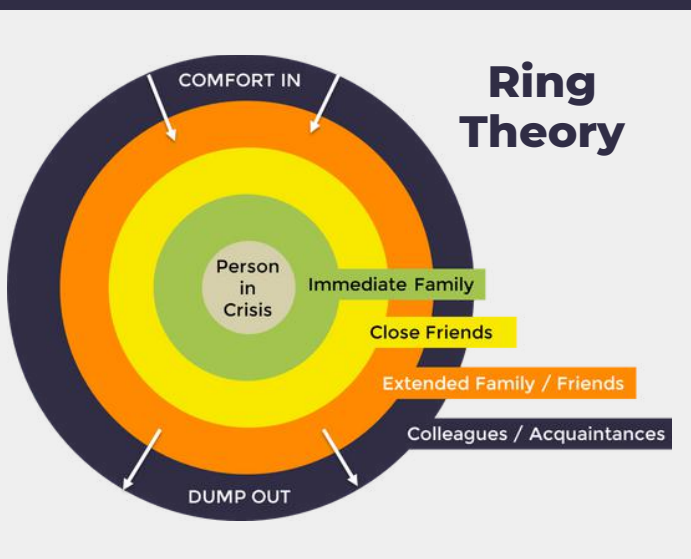
Family Communication

- When you're ready, what would you like to talk about or share with me?
- How do you feel about the way we've been communicating lately, and is there anything you'd like to change?

NOTES

Talking Tips & How-Tos

SOME HELPFUL CONCEPTS WHEN OFFERING COMFORT & SUPPORT



Ring Theory: Comfort In / Dump Out

The Ring Theory provides an easy to remember rule about the flow of comments during a crisis (like cancer) and helps ensure the person in crisis (e.g. cancer patient) doesn't have to manage the emotional burden of others.

Comfort In: Offer comfort to those in rings closer to the center than you, like listening, offering help, and providing emotional support.

Dump Out: Express negative emotions to those in rings further out from the center than you.

Example: If you're a close friend, you would offer support to the patient and immediate family. If you're feeling frustrated, express those feelings to a further-out ring, like another friend, extended family member or counselor.

Choosing Empathy & Compassion Over Sympathy

Sympathy is defined as "the feeling that you care about and are sorry about someone else's trouble, grief, misfortune, etc." It often comes across as pity, and is unhelpful to the recipient. Sympathy example: "I feel so bad for you."

Empathy is defined as "the feeling that you understand and share another person's experiences and emotions." Empathy example: "I can only imagine how tough this must be for you."

Compassion is the understanding that someone is going through something difficult and actively trying to alleviate the struggle they are going through. Empathy and compassion can help them feel heard and understood, build trust, and open up lines of communication.



Toxic Positivity

- "Don't be so negative."
- "Look at the bright side."
- "Everything happens for a reason."
- "It could be worse."
- "At least it's not..."
- "You should be grateful."

Instead, try...

- "I'm sorry you're going through this."
- "How can I help you?"
- "What you're feeling is valid."
- "This situation is really difficult."
- "I love you through all your ups and downs."

Toxic Positivity vs Supportive & Hopeful

Toxic positivity is the excessive and forced emphasis on maintaining a positive mindset, and involves dismissing or minimizing negative emotions, which can lead to feelings of isolation and invalidation for the person needing support.

Supportive and hopeful acknowledges both the positive and negative aspects of a situation, offering genuine optimism without denying the reality of the challenges faced. This allows for a balanced perspective, where hope is coupled with empathy and understanding.

Toxic positivity limits the opportunity for authentic emotional expression, whereas being supportive and hopeful creates a safe space for individuals to express their true feelings and receive the empathy and encouragement they need.

Talking Tips: What to Say and What to Avoid

Words carry immense power, especially after a cancer diagnosis. Be mindful of your words, as certain phrases might unintentionally cause hurt or discomfort. Remember, empathy is about being present and supportive without trying to fix or change the person's feelings. Be genuine and patient in your communication. Every individual is unique, so tailor your support to their needs, preferences and cultural norms. The goal is to create a supportive and understanding environment where the individual feels heard and respected.



Offer Specific Support

Instead of saying, "Let me know if you need anything," offer specific help like, "Can I bring you dinner tonight" or "Do you need a ride to your appointment?"



Don't Minimize Their Experience

Avoid saying things like, "It could be worse" or "You'll be fine." These words can feel dismissive.



Listen More, Talk Less

Sometimes, just being there to listen is more valuable than any words you can say.



Avoid Unsolicited Advice

Avoid giving medical advice or suggesting alternative treatments unless they specifically ask for your input.



Acknowledge Their Feelings

Validate their emotions by saying things like, "It's okay to feel scared" or "I'm here for you, no matter what you're feeling."



Don't Compare Their Experience

Avoid saying things like, "I know someone who had the same thing and they were fine." Everyone's experience with cancer is unique.



Stay Positive, But Realistic

Encourage them with statements like "I believe in your strength" or "I'm here to support you through this."



Avoid "I Know How You Feel"

Unless you've had cancer yourself, it's better to say, "I can only imagine how tough this must be."



Respect Their Privacy

Always ask before sharing their diagnosis with others and respect their wishes regarding privacy.



Avoid Making It About You

Try not to relate everything back to your own experiences. Keep the focus on their feelings and needs.



DAILY/WEEKLY CHECK-IN WORKSHEET

This worksheet provides a structured way to reflect on the past day or week and helps everyone stay in touch about both emotional and practical needs.

☒ How has my energy level been this week on scale from 1-10? _____

☒ Have I felt supported by my family? _____

☒ Did I feel overwhelmed at any point? Please explain.

☒ What was one thing that made me feel better this week?

☒ What do I need from my family or friends moving forward?

Example:

How has my energy level been this week?

6/10

Have I felt supported by my family?

Yes

Did I feel overwhelmed at any point?

Yes, when I got nervous about my next scan.

What was one thing that made me feel better this week?

Going for a walk with a friend.

What do I need from my family or friends moving forward?

More time to relax without having to talk about my treatment all the time.

FEELINGS & EMOTIONS CHECK-IN WORKSHEET

This worksheet helps them identify and communicate their emotions.



How am I feeling today?



What has been on my mind the most lately?



Is there something that's been bothering me but I haven't shared yet?



What can someone do to help me feel better right now?

Example:

How am I feeling today?

Tired and a little overwhelmed.

What has been on my mind the most lately?

I've been worried about the upcoming treatment and how it will affect my energy levels.

Is there something that's been bothering me but I haven't shared yet?

Yes, I've been feeling distant from my friends, but I don't know how to talk to them about it.

What can someone do to help me feel better right now?

Just being around, maybe watching a movie with me.

Active Listening Techniques

8 TIPS FOR Active Listening

Paraphrase: Try to paraphrase what the speaker said to make sure you understand and to show that you are paying attention.



Ask questions: Ask questions to encourage the speaker to elaborate on their thoughts and feelings.



Use positive body language: Show that you are engaged and interested by nodding, maintaining eye contact, and having an open and relaxed body posture.



Show empathy: If the speaker voices negative feelings, try to validate them. Consider why they feel this way and put yourself in their shoes.



Avoid judgment: Your goal is to understand their perspective. Try not to interrupt with your own opinions while they are speaking.



Listening may be enough: Avoid the temptation to "fix" the problem. Sometimes, the speaker just wants us to listen.



Evaluate the conversation: After you have fully taken in what the speaker has said, take a moment to evaluate the conversation.



Don't give advice too quickly: Allow them to finish speaking before attempting to give advice. Make sure you fully understand them first. Practice the 3 second rule if needed.



Adapted from tcea.org

Benefits of Active Listening



**BETTER
RELATIONSHIPS**



**IMPROVED
UNDERSTANDING**



**ENHANCED
LEARNING**

Quick Tips to Improve Your Active Listening:

- **Practice Daily:** Start with everyday conversations.
- **Mindfulness Exercises:** Enhance your focus and concentration.
- **Feedback:** Ask friends or family how well you listen and areas to improve.

Body Language & Nonverbal Cues

Strategies to maintain a supportive presence

Active listening, particularly watching for body language and nonverbal cues, can help tip you off and avert issues before they escalate. For example, if they are feeling anger, frustration, or impatience, you might observe the following:



Facial expressions

Frowning or scowling, clenching or grinding teeth, eye rolling.



Posture

Leaning away, rigid posture



Physical Distance

Increasing distance



Vocal Cues

Sighing, sharp or abrupt tone



Eye contact

Avoiding eye contact, intense staring



Gestures

Crossed arms, tapping fingers or feet, hand clenching.

When you observe any nonverbal cues above, try to maintain a calm, open, and empathetic demeanor to ensure effective communication and support. Below are some strategies to manage emotions and maintain a supportive presence.

Pause and Breathe

Take a moment to pause the conversation and take a few deep breaths. This can help calm the nervous system and reduce feelings of anger or frustration.

Acknowledge Emotions

Recognize and acknowledge your own emotions. Mentally note, "I'm feeling frustrated right now," which can help manage the emotion.

Practice Self-Compassion

It's natural to feel a range of emotions when supporting someone through a difficult time. Being kind to yourself can reduce feelings of impatience.

Adjust Body Language

Consciously relax the body, uncross arms, and adopt a more open posture. This can reduce feelings of defensiveness and promote a more supportive interaction.

Use Empathetic Statements

Reassure them with empathetic statements, such as "I'm here for you, and I want to understand what you're going through."

Seek Clarification

If they are feeling frustrated due to a misunderstanding, ask clarifying questions to ensure you fully understand their perspective.

Take a Break

If the emotions are overwhelming, it's okay to politely excuse yourself for a brief break. A short walk or a few minutes of quiet can help reset emotions.

Practice Active Listening

Refocus on the principles of active listening, such as nodding, making eye contact, and reflecting on what they said. This can help recenter the conversation and reduce feelings of impatience.

Set Boundaries

If they're feeling repeatedly overwhelmed, it may be necessary to set boundaries around the time and energy you can devote to supporting them. This can help prevent burnout and ensure that the support is helpful.

BOUNDARY-SETTING WORKSHEET

This worksheet help parents and teens/young adults set, communicate, and respect each other's boundaries in order to foster healthy and supportive relationships.

What are boundaries & why are they important?

Boundaries are limits we set for ourselves in relationships to protect our physical, emotional, and mental well-being. They help define how we want others to treat us and how we treat others.

- Maintain respect and understanding.
- Prevent misunderstandings and conflicts.
- Allow us to protect our emotional and physical space.
- Promote healthy communication.

Moving Forward...

Write one commitment you will both make to ensure boundaries are respected in the future.

Our Commitment:

"We commit to respecting each other's space and checking in regularly to see how we're doing with boundaries."

Section 2: Identify Your Own Boundaries

- What are some physical boundaries that are important to me?
 - (Example: "I need my personal space when I'm resting or not feeling well.")
 - Answer: _____
- What are some emotional boundaries I need?
 - (Example: "I need time before I talk about how I'm feeling.")
 - Answer: _____
- What are some boundaries about time and privacy that I want to set?
 - (Example: "I need to have time to myself when I'm overwhelmed.")
 - Answer: _____

Share and Discuss

Discuss your boundaries and why they are important to you.

Reflect on one boundary you didn't realize was important to them

How can you respect this boundary?

Create Mutual Boundaries

Mutual Physical Boundary

Example: "We will both give each other personal space when feeling overwhelmed."

Mutual Emotional Boundary

Example: "We will take time to cool off before discussing difficult topics."

Mutual Time/Privacy Boundary

Example: "We will respect each other's alone time, but check in regularly to stay connected."

NOTES

Setting Boundaries

Setting boundaries means clearly communicating your needs, limits, and preferences to others. It involves understanding and respecting your own emotional and physical space and conveying this to those around you. Remember your needs are valid, and setting boundaries is a form of self-care and self-respect. Setting boundaries typically involves several key steps designed to help you effectively communicate and assert your needs and limits to others. Here's a general guide for setting and managing your boundaries.

Identify Your Boundaries

- Determine what you are comfortable with and what you are not. Consider physical, emotional, mental, and social boundaries.
- **Example:** Identify if you need more personal space, less physical exertion, or specific emotional support.

Listen to the Response

- Be prepared to listen to the other person's reaction or concerns.
- **Dialogue:** Engage in a two-way conversation where both parties are heard.

Choose the Right Time and Place

- Discuss boundaries when both you and the other person are calm and not distracted.
- **Example:** Choose a private and comfortable setting away from distractions for sensitive topics.

Offer Alternatives When Possible

- Suggest alternatives that respect your boundaries while accommodating others.
- **Example:** "I'm not up for a visit, but I'd love to text or have a short phone call."

Use Clear and Direct Language

- Clearly state what your boundary is. Avoid vague or ambiguous language.
- **Example:** "I need to rest by 9 PM, so I can't have long phone calls in the evening."

Reaffirm Your Boundaries as Needed

- You may need to restate your boundaries if they are not respected or understood.
- **Consistency:** Be consistent in enforcing your boundaries.

Express Your Feelings and Needs

- Use "I" statements to express how you feel and what you need without blaming or accusing others. A good "I" statement takes responsibility for one's own feelings, while tactfully describing a problem.
- **Example:** "I feel overwhelmed when I have too many visitors. I need more quiet time to rest."

Prepare for Pushback

- Understand that some people may resist or test your boundaries.
- **Stand Firm:** Remain calm and reiterate your boundaries firmly and respectfully.

Be Assertive but Respectful

- Stand firm on your boundaries while being respectful towards others.
- **Example:** "I appreciate your concern, but I need to follow the diet recommended by my doctor."

Practice Self-Care

- Acknowledge that your boundaries are valid and important.
- **Support:** Seek support from friends, family, or professionals if you find it difficult to set or maintain boundaries.

Set Your Boundaries

Why do you fear setting boundaries?

- ☐ FEAR OF REJECTION
- ☐ FEAR OF CONFRONTATION
- ☐ FEAR OF NO LONGER BEING NEEDED
- ☐ GUILT
- ☐ SAFETY CONCERNS

Examples of Potentially Unhealthy Boundaries

Nonexistent boundaries

Oversharing personal details, letting others make decisions for you, or accepting disrespectful or abusive behavior

Weak or poorly-expressed boundaries

Spending no time apart from a partner, unable to say no, or unhealthy habits that keep people codependent

Rigid boundaries

Putting walls up to protect you from others, keeping your distance to avoid getting hurt, or believing you don't need anyone

SIGNS YOU MAY LACK BOUNDARIES

- 🚫 You rarely say no
- 🚫 Feeling overwhelmed
- 🚫 Regular thoughts about dropping everything and running away
- 🚫 Avoiding calls and interactions with others in case they ask for something
- 🚫 Feeling resentful when people ask for your help
- 🚫 You take on more tasks than you can handle
- 🚫 Having no time for yourself
- 🚫 Feeling burned out

5 Tips for Setting Boundaries

1. Know your limits
2. Be clear and direct
3. Practice saying no
4. Prioritize self-care
5. Seek support when needed

HOW TO SET BOUNDARIES

<i>I value</i>	<i>so I need</i>	<i>& will honor by</i>
My well-being	To say "no" when it's not a true "yes"	Staying true when there is external pressure
Energy & Clarity	Personal time	Having a firm morning ritual
Growth	To test my limits	Taking action when I'm afraid
Honesty	To be real with myself and others	speaking openly and truthfully

How to Communicate Boundaries Effectively

- ✓ Use "I" statements
- ✓ Be assertive, not aggressive
- ✓ Listen actively
- ✓ Respond calmly to pushback
- ✓ Reaffirm your boundaries as needed

EMPATHY BUILDING WORKSHEET

This worksheet encourages everyone to understand each other's perspectives so they feel seen and heard.



What do you think I am most worried about right now?



What do you think helps me feel better when I'm sad or anxious?



What is one thing you think I don't understand about what you're going through?



What's one thing you would like me to know about how you're feeling?

Example:

What do you think I am most worried about right now?

You're probably most worried about how the treatment will go and if the side effects will be hard to manage.

What do you think helps me feel better when I'm sad or anxious?

I think watching movies or talking about anything other than cancer helps you feel better.

What is one thing you think I don't understand about what you're going through?

I feel like you might not understand how tired I get, even when I don't look sick.

What's one thing you would like me to know about how you're feeling?

I'm scared about what's going to happen, but I don't always want to talk about it.

STRESS & COPING WORKSHEET

This worksheet helps each person explore what is causing stress and how to cope.



What is stressing me out right now?



On a scale of 1–10, how stressful does it feel? _____



What is something I can do to manage this stress?



Who can I talk to about how I'm feeling?



What has helped me feel calm in the past?

Example:

What is stressing me out right now?

The side effects of my treatment and how I'll manage school at the same time.

On a scale of 1–10, how stressful does it feel?

8/10

What is something I can do to manage this stress?

Take things one day at a time and talk to my teacher about extensions.

Who can I talk to about how I'm feeling?

My mom and my friend, Emma.

What has helped me feel calm in the past?

Listening to music and taking walks.



5

SELF-CARE WORKSHEET

Self-care involves actions and behaviors that improve well-being, maintain health, and enhance personal, emotional, and spiritual growth. It is a dynamic and personalized process, and what works for one person might not work for another. The key is to listen to your body, acknowledge your emotions, and take steps that contribute positively to your well-being.

MAKING SELF-CARE A PRIORITY

Regular Schedule: Incorporate self-care activities into your daily routine. It could be as simple as a 10-minute meditation or a short walk.

Balanced Diet and Exercise: A healthy diet and regular exercise can significantly improve your physical and mental well-being.

Adequate Rest: Ensure you get enough sleep. Lack of sleep can affect your health and your ability to provide care.

Mindfulness and Relaxation: Practices like yoga, meditation, or deep breathing can reduce stress and improve your mental health.

Hobbies and Interests: Engage in activities that you enjoy and that help you relax. Whether it's reading, painting, or playing a sport, these activities can provide a much-needed break from caregiving.

ENCOURAGING SELF-CARE IN OTHERS

Lead by Example: Showing how you prioritize your self-care can encourage them to do the same.

Educate about Benefits: Talk to them about the importance of self-care in their healing or overall well-being.

Create a Supportive Environment: Encourage them to engage in activities that they enjoy and find relaxing.

Respect Their Independence: Give them space and time to practice self-care independently. It's important for their sense of autonomy and dignity.

Assist in Planning: Help them to incorporate self-care activities into their routine, keeping in mind their energy levels and medical condition.

COMMUNICATING SELF-CARE NEEDS AND BOUNDARIES

Open Communication: Be honest about your need for self-care. Explain how taking care of yourself improves your ability to be present for others.

Setting Boundaries: It's okay to say no when you're feeling overwhelmed. Set clear boundaries about what you can and cannot do.

Seek Support: Don't hesitate to ask for help. You don't have to do everything on your own.

Professional Help: Consider talking to a counselor or therapist if you're struggling to cope.

 b-present.org/roadmap

Additional Tips

Stay Connected: Maintain social connections as much as possible. Social support is crucial for emotional health.

Be Kind to Yourself: Recognize that it's normal to have good and bad days. Be patient and gentle with yourself.

Embrace Self-Care

self-care (noun)

The practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health.

TYPES OF SELF-CARE

EMOTIONAL

Activities that help you connect and reflect on emotions like journaling, talking, therapy, art, and music.

SPIRITUAL

Activities that nurture your spirit like meditation, yoga, prayer, time outdoors, tarot cards, and visiting a place of worship.

PRACTICAL

Tasks that help prevent future stress like organizing, creating a budget, house chores, and learning something new.

PHYSICAL

Activities that improve your physical health like movement, sleep, healthy eating, skin care, baths, and drinking water.

SOCIAL

Activities that help nurture your relationships with others like calling family, time with friends, and detoxing social media.

MENTAL

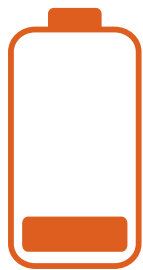
Activities that stimulate your mind like reading, puzzles, writing, playing a game, and watching a documentary.

self-care checklist

INTENTION	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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CHECKING YOUR BATTERY

How are you currently feeling?



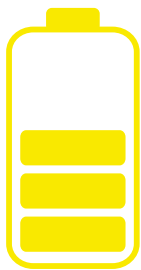
Empty

What's draining you? Create a boundary & do one thing that fills you up.



Struggling

What area of your life is suffering most right now? Focus on that area.



Okay

How can you love on yourself today to make your day a tiny bit better?



Good

Nice work. How can you maintain the levels you're currently at?



Great

Bravo! Keep meeting your needs and practicing self-care.

SELF-CARE IDEAS

MIND

- Read
- Listen to a podcast
- Declutter
- Take a class
- Meditate
- Affirmations
- Brain teasers

BODY

- Walk
- Go to the gym
- Do yoga
- Stretch
- Drink water
- Eat whole foods
- Get enough sleep

SOUL

- Practice gratitude
- Unplug
- Work on your passion
- Journal
- Listen to music
- Pamper yourself
- Go outside

ENERGY GIVERS

Sunlight, exercise, nourishing food, hydration, fresh air, music, meditation, deep breaths, intimacy, positive affirmations, sleep, mindfulness, art, meaningful connections, being present

ENERGY TAKERS

People pleasing, too much screen time, social media, fear, doubt, stress, overthinking, clutter, dehydration, not eating enough, junk food, overworking, no exercise, living in the past

GRATITUDE JOURNAL WORKSHEET

This worksheet focuses on positive reflections and emotional bonding through shared gratitude.



One thing I'm grateful for today is...



A person who made me feel supported recently is...



One thing that makes me feel hopeful is...



One way I've seen myself grow during this experience is...



I want to say "thank you" to (a person) for...

Example:

One thing I'm grateful for today is...

Getting to spend time with my friend.

A person who made me feel supported recently is...

My brother for driving me to my appointment.

One thing that makes me feel hopeful is...

Knowing I have a good medical team looking out for me.

One way I've seen myself grow during this experience is...

I've become more patient with myself and others.

I want to say "thank you" to (a person) for...

Thank you to my nurse for always making me laugh when I'm at the hospital.

REFLECTION & MOVING FORWARD WORKSHEET

This worksheet encourages reflection on what has been working well and what adjustments can be made for the future.



What has been going well for me recently?



What has been hard to manage lately?



What do I want to work on improving moving forward?



What is one thing that would help me feel more supported?



A change I'd like to see in our relationship is...

Example:

What has been going well for me recently?

I've been able to stay connected with my friends more.

What has been hard to manage lately?

Balancing rest and schoolwork has been tough.

What do I want to work on improving moving forward?

I want to be better at asking for help when I need it.

What is one thing that would help me feel more supported?

Having regular check-ins with my teachers about my workload.

A change I'd like to see in our relationship is...

That we spend more time talking about things other than my illness.



Forgiveness



What does forgiveness do?



HOW TO APOLOGIZE

1. Say <u>what</u> you are sorry for	"I am sorry for..."
2. Say <u>why</u> it was wrong	"It was wrong because..."
3. Accept full <u>responsibility</u>	"I take full responsibility for what I did."
4. Ask <u>how</u> to make amends	"How can I make this better?"
5. <u>Commit</u> to not doing it again	"Moving forward I promise to..."
6. Ask for <u>forgiveness</u>	"Will you accept my apology?"
7. <u>Thank</u> them	"Thank you for bringing this to my attention."

These are **not** apologies...

- I'm sorry you feel that way
- I'm sorry you misinterpreted what I said
- You misunderstood what I meant
- I'm sorry but...
- What about that time you...
- It was your fault that I...

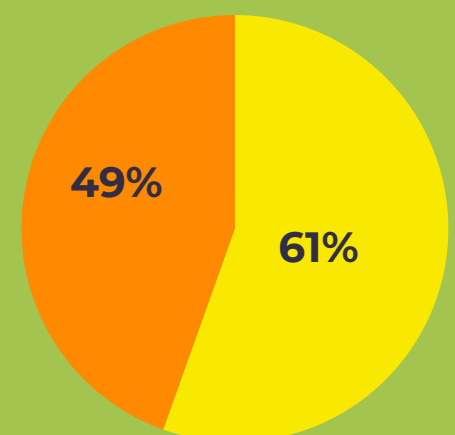
forgiveness (noun)

Forgiveness involves an intentional decision to let go of resentment and anger toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they deserve your forgiveness. It does not mean forgetting, nor does it mean condoning or excusing offenses.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness brings a kind of peace that allows you to focus on yourself and helps you move forward with life and has the following health benefits:

- Healthier relationships
- Improved mental health
- Less anxiety, stress and hostility
- Fewer symptoms of depression
- Lower blood pressure
- A stronger immune system
- Improved heart health
- Improved self-esteem



61 % of cancer patients

indicated that using forgiveness therapy helped to decrease levels of anger and increase their capacity for forgiveness.

Source: Gitnux.org

The Importance of Forgiveness

Cancer diagnosis and treatment can be a challenging experience for both patients and their communities of support. Misunderstandings, frustrations, and emotional distress are common. Forgiveness can play a vital role in maintaining strong, supportive relationships during these trying times. This worksheet is a tool to help facilitate understanding, communication, and emotional healing. Remember, seeking professional support from a therapist or counselor is always beneficial in navigating complex emotions and situations.

Steps in Asking for Forgiveness

Acknowledge the Offense

Clearly understand and state what action or behavior caused hurt or harm.

Express Remorse

Sincerely express your regret for the hurt caused.

Take Responsibility

Accept full responsibility for your actions without making excuses.

Make Amends

Offer a plan or gesture to make up for the harm caused.

Request Forgiveness

Ask if the other person is willing to forgive you.

Steps in Offering Forgiveness

Reflect on the Incident

Acknowledge your emotions and the impact the incident had on you.

Empathize

Try to understand the situation from the other person's perspective.

Express Your Feelings

Communicate how the incident affected you.

Decide to Forgive

Make a conscious choice to forgive, even if it takes time.

Move Forward

Focus on healing and rebuilding trust.

Reflection and Personal Notes

Asking for and offering forgiveness takes courage, strength and compassion. Consider the following as you reflect on either apologizing for a mistake you made or offering forgiveness to someone that harmed you.

- What situations have I encountered where forgiveness was needed?
- How can I apply the steps of asking for and offering forgiveness in my life?
- What are my personal challenges in practicing forgiveness, and how can I overcome them?



Example Situation

You say hurtful things to a loved one out of stress and fear.



Asking for forgiveness

"I shouldn't have lashed out at you. It was unfair, and I'm truly sorry for my words. Can we talk about it?"



Offering forgiveness

"I was hurt by what you said, but I understand it was said in a moment of stress. Let's work on how we can communicate better during these times."

GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

This worksheet helps everyone work towards short-term or long-term goals that can bring a sense of purpose and control.



What is one goal I want to work on this month? (Examples: physical health, mental health, social connection)



Why is this goal important to me?



What is one step I can take toward this goal today?



Who can help me stay on track with this goal?

An example...

What is one goal I want to work on this month?

I want to stay physically active by doing light yoga three times a week.

Why is this goal important to me?

Because it helps me feel stronger and more in control of my body.

What is one step I can take toward this goal today?

Find a simple yoga routine online that I can follow and will stay consistent.

Who can help me stay on track with this goal?

My mom and my yoga instructor.

PROBLEM-SOLVING WORKSHEET

This worksheet encourages family members to work through challenges in a collaborative way



What is a problem or issue that needs to be addressed?



How does this problem make me feel?



What are some possible solutions?



Which solution feels like the best fit?



What can we both do to help make this solution work?

An example...

What is a problem or issue that needs to be addressed?

I feel too tired to do my schoolwork but don't want to fall behind.

How does this problem make me feel?

Frustrated and anxious.

What are some possible solutions?

1) Ask for an extension from my teachers; 2) Break tasks into smaller parts; 3) Take time off school to focus on health.

Which solution feels like the best fit?

Asking for an extension and doing small tasks each day.

Which solution feels like the best fit?

You can help me organize my tasks and remind me to take breaks.

3

B-THERE APP: SHOWING UP WHEN AND HOW YOU ARE NEEDED

After a cancer diagnosis, keeping everyone updated can be exhausting. Supporters want to show up but may not know how. When asking for support, sometimes it's hard to find the right words, or it may feel uncomfortable asking directly. *b-there* helps you quickly provide clear guidance about status, what connection and support you want, and when you need space. Supporters check the app before connecting or offering support, ensuring they show up and provide support when and how you need it. That reduces stress for everyone!



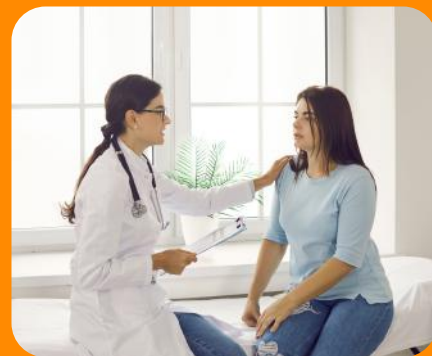
Patient / Survivor

Share status, mood, desire to connect, and health boundaries. Request support and activities. Support other peers in your network.



Family & Friends

Share your status and availability to support, view status and sign up for wish requests. Set up your own private network of support.



Health Care Team

Stay on top of patient social support needs, how they are feeling, and any resource requests before you stop by or check in.

Respecting Desired Privacy & Boundaries

b-there is an invite-only app, and only the supporters you select can access your information, keeping your privacy and boundaries in check.

- Only you see who is in your network.
- You get to decide how to connect and whether your health is up for discussion.
- Items in your wish list are only visible to the supporter(s) you invite.
- Only you can see who accepts your wishes
- Delete any unhelpful supporters at any time

Sign Up: Set Up Your Profile

- Register using your Google, Facebook, or Apple account, or you can use your email address and create a password.
- Set up your profile and enter information that helps your network know your preferences and what to avoid. Leave blank what you prefer not to share.

Connect: Invite Your Supporters

- Invite members to your private network by entering their email addresses.
- Once they accept the invite, they're in your network and can start supporting.

Status: Keep Them Updated on Your Progress and Boundaries

- Share a quick note about how it's going
- Share how you're feeling that day so they know how to show up
- Choose how you want to connect (welcome visitors or set as "do not disturb")
- Let them know if health-related questions are welcome

Wishlist: Let Them Know the Kind of Support You Need

- Use the wishlist to request anything—a favorite food, comfort item, visit, helpful task, or a resource. Share the link (e.g. URL, Google doc, gift registry). Add details and the desired date, and your invited supporters can sign up.
- Once it is claimed, other invited supporters will know it is no longer available, avoiding duplication or unexpected support.

b-there: Show up how & when you're needed

Finally, an app for everyone to stay synced on status, updates, and needs. No more stressing about how to show up and when to give space. Download the app and start supporting today!



Connect



Status



Wishlist

**USED BY
PATIENTS &
CAREGIVERS
TO RALLY
SUPPORT**

My Status

Quick Update

Not feeling well today. Thanks for your support!

Desire To Connect

Do Not Disturb ▼

How I'm Feeling

🤒 Sick ▼

Health Questions

Not Today ▼

Save Changes

Download *b-there*



Learn more at b-present.org/b-there-app



Learn more on
b-present.org