



Families have Cancer, Too - Helping Your Children Cope with Cancer

8th Annual Lone Star
Blood Cancer Conference
Saturday, February 23, 2013
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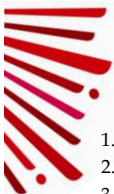


Presentation Goals

- How to tell your children about a diagnosis
- Common concerns of children
- Age appropriate coping strategies
- Signs of distress
- Community Resources

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Why talk to kids about cancer?

1. Knowledge lowers anxiety
2. Children are observant
3. Inclusion in the family process is important
4. Developing coping skills is a life task
5. Discussion opens lines of communication

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What do I tell the children?

All children need the following basic information:

- The name of the cancer
- The part of the body where the cancer is located
- How it will be treated
- How their own lives will be affected
- What to expect with treatments
- Consider age, personality, and relationship

References provided from www.cancer.org

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Handling the child's questions

- Show you appreciate their inquiry
- Attempt to discover or clarify the real meaning of their question
- Explain you might know the answers to every question

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Development stages of children

Infants & Toddlers

Infant's knowledge of the world is limited to sensory perceptions & motor activities. Bonding and trust begins to form.

How can you help your child?

- Increased contact
- Comfort measures
- Routine
- Take care of yourself!

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Development stages of children

Preschoolers

Language development continues, and perspective is introduced. Children begin to display independence in tasks.

How can you help your child?

- Immediate time frame
- Reminders
- Show & tell
- Reassurance

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Development stages of children

School Age

Children are able to understand logic, but not abstract ideas. Developing confidence and competence.

How can I help my child?

- Dispel myths
- Only give information needed
- One-on-one time
- Let them participate in the choices

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Development stages of children

Teenagers

They are developing a sense of identity outside of the family. Social connectivity is important.

How can I help my teenager?

- Respect their boundaries
- Emphasize their role as the child
- Include their opinions
- Surrogate adult mentor

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Common concerns of children

- Did I cause the cancer?
- Can I catch it?
- Will you die?
- Who will make me dinner?
- Do I tell my friends?
- Can I be mad/sad/happy?

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What can help the family?

1. Designate a special friend
2. Keep routines
3. Allow flexibility
4. Include child's environment
5. Define family structure
6. Create family fun!
7. Form a protective environment

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What are signs of distress?

- Stay in tune with child's moods
- Change in patterns
 - Eating
 - Activity
 - Sleeping
 - Health
 - Relationships

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DFW Resources

- Cancer Support Community, North Texas
2710 Oak Lawn, Dallas, TX 75219
(214) 219-8877
CancerSupportTexas.org
- Sammons Cancer Center- Cvetko Patient Educ. & Support Center
3410 Worth St, Dallas, TX 75246
(214) 820-2608
BaylorHealth.com/cvetko
- Cancer Care Services
623 S Henderson St, Fort Worth, TX 76104
(817) 921-0653
CancerCareServices.org
- Cancer Support Community, Collin County
1105 Central Expwy, Prof Bldg 1- #130, Allen, TX 75013
(972) 747-6078

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"You are braver than you believe, you are stronger than you seem, and you are smarter than you think."

Christopher Robin to Winnie the Pooh



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Questions & Answers

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