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Supporting Someone Living with Cancer Workbook

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Disclaimer

This workbook has been created by Safe Haven Connect CIC to provide general information and practical guidance for people supporting someone living with cancer.

It is intended for family members, friends, carers and volunteers. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment.

If you have concerns about someone's health or wellbeing, seek advice from their healthcare team or another qualified healthcare professional.

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Supporting Someone Living with Cancer

PAGE 1 – Understanding Their Journey

A cancer diagnosis can affect every part of a person's life.

They may experience a wide range of emotions, physical symptoms and uncertainty about the future. Treatment can also bring challenges such as tiredness, pain, changes in appearance and emotional ups and downs.

Every person's experience is different.

Your support doesn't have to be perfect. Simply being present, listening and showing compassion can make a meaningful difference.

♥ A person living with cancer may experience...

- ☐ Fatigue
- ☐ Pain or discomfort
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Low mood
- ☐ Worry about treatment
- ☐ Changes in appetite
- ☐ Difficulty sleeping
- ☐ Changes in confidence
- ☐ Other:

♥ What do I hope to learn from this workbook?

♥ How can I become a better supporter?

♥ Remember

Every cancer journey is different.

Listen without judgement, respect the person's choices and offer support in the way that works best for them.

Support the person—not just the diagnosis.

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PAGE 2 – Understanding the Person

A cancer diagnosis does not define who someone is.

They are still the same person, with their own personality, interests, hopes and dreams.

Some days they may want to talk about cancer. Other days they may simply want to enjoy everyday life without discussing it.

Follow their lead and support them in the way that feels right for them.

♥ Things they enjoy

☐ Spending time with family.

☐ Listening to music.

☐ Watching films or TV.

☐ Reading.

- ☐ Gardening.
- ☐ Walking.
- ☐ Arts and crafts.
- ☐ Visiting favourite places.
- ☐ Other:

♥ Things that help them feel comforted

♥ How can I support them today?

- ☐ Listen without judgement.
- ☐ Respect their wishes.
- ☐ Spend quality time together.
- ☐ Be patient.
- ☐ Offer reassurance.
- ☐ Help with practical tasks.
- ☐ Encourage rest when needed.
- ☐ Other:

♥ What have I learned about what matters most to them?

♥ Remember

Sometimes the greatest support isn't about finding the right words.

It's about making someone feel seen, valued and cared for.

See the person before the illness, listen with compassion and be present through every stage of their journey.

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PAGE 3 – Communicating with Compassion

A cancer diagnosis can bring many emotions, and people often cope in different ways.

Some people may want to talk openly about their diagnosis, while others may prefer to focus on everyday life.

The most important thing you can do is listen, respect their wishes and let them guide the conversation.

Helpful ways to communicate

- ☐ Listen more than you speak.
- ☐ Let them choose what they want to talk about.
- ☐ Be honest and kind.
- ☐ Accept periods of silence.
- ☐ Ask how they're feeling.
- ☐ Respect if they don't want to discuss their illness.
- ☐ Offer reassurance without making promises.
- ☐ Other:

Helpful things I can say

- ☐ "I'm here for you."
- ☐ "How can I support you today?"
- ☐ "It's okay if you don't feel like talking."
- ☐ "Would you like some company?"
- ☐ "I'm thinking of you."
- ☐ Other:

♥ Things I should try to avoid saying

- ☐ "Everything will be fine."
- ☐ "Stay positive."
- ☐ Comparing their experience to someone else's.
- ☐ Giving unwanted advice.
- ☐ Making assumptions about how they feel.
- ☐ Other:

♥ One thing I can do today to show I care

♥ Remember

You don't need the perfect words.

Your kindness, patience and willingness to listen can provide comfort during difficult moments.

Sometimes the greatest gift you can give is your time, your understanding and your presence.

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PAGE 4 – Offering Practical Support

Cancer treatment can affect a person's energy, strength and daily routine.

Simple acts of practical support can make everyday life a little easier and show someone they don't have to face everything alone.

Always ask what would be most helpful, rather than assuming.

 Practical ways I can help

- ☐ Prepare or deliver a meal.
- ☐ Help with shopping.
- ☐ Drive them to appointments.
- ☐ Collect prescriptions.
- ☐ Help with household chores.
- ☐ Walk the dog or care for pets.
- ☐ Help with childcare.
- ☐ Sit with them during treatment or appointments.
- ☐ Other:

 Things they may be finding difficult

♥ One practical thing I can do this week

♥ How can I continue supporting them?

- ☐ Check in regularly.
- ☐ Be flexible if plans change.
- ☐ Respect when they need rest.
- ☐ Offer practical help without pressure.
- ☐ Encourage them without overwhelming them.
- ☐ Continue showing kindness throughout their journey.
- ☐ Other:

Remember

Support doesn't always have to be big.

A meal, a lift to an appointment, a message asking how they're doing or simply sitting quietly together can make a meaningful difference.

Small acts of kindness often provide the greatest comfort.

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PAGE 5 – Supporting Their Emotional Wellbeing

Living with cancer can affect emotional wellbeing as much as physical health.

A person may experience fear, sadness, anger, uncertainty or hope, and these feelings can change from day to day.

You don't need to have all the answers. Simply listening, offering reassurance and respecting how they feel can provide valuable support.

 They may be feeling...

☐ Anxious.

☐ Frightened.

☐ Sad.

☐ Angry.

☐ Overwhelmed.

☐ Hopeful.

☐ Lonely.

☐ Uncertain about the future.

☐ Other:

 How can I support their emotional wellbeing?

☐ Listen without judgement.

☐ Let them express their feelings.

☐ Respect when they need space.

☐ Spend quality time together.

☐ Encourage them to accept help.

☐ Celebrate good days.

☐ Be patient during difficult days.

☐ Other:

 What usually helps lift their spirits?

♥ One thing I can do today to support them

♥ Remember

Every person's emotional journey through cancer is different.

There will be good days and difficult days.

Your patience, compassion and willingness to simply be there can help someone feel supported, valued and less alone.

You don't have to take away their fears—you just have to remind them they don't have to face them alone.

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PAGE 6 – Looking After Yourself as a Supporter

Supporting someone living with cancer can be emotionally and physically demanding.

You may experience worry, sadness, uncertainty or helplessness while watching someone you care about go through treatment and recovery.

Looking after your own wellbeing isn't selfish—it helps you continue offering calm, compassionate and consistent support.

Remember, you matter too.

♥ How am I feeling today?

- ☐ Calm
- ☐ Hopeful
- ☐ Tired
- ☐ Worried
- ☐ Stressed
- ☐ Overwhelmed
- ☐ Sad
- ☐ Emotionally drained
- ☐ Other:

♥ This week I will...

- ☐ Take regular breaks.
- ☐ Get enough sleep.
- ☐ Eat healthy meals.
- ☐ Spend time outdoors.
- ☐ Talk to someone I trust.
- ☐ Make time for activities I enjoy.
- ☐ Accept support when it's offered.

☐ Practice self-care.

☐ Other:

♥ People who support me

1.

2.

3.

♥ One thing I will do for myself this week

♥ Remember

Supporting someone through cancer doesn't mean carrying everything on your own.

Looking after your own physical and emotional wellbeing helps you continue being the caring, patient and supportive person they need.

Caring for yourself is an important part of caring for someone else.

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PAGE 7 – Encouraging Hope and Quality of Life

Living with cancer can bring many challenges, but it doesn't take away a person's hopes, interests or the things that make life meaningful.

Supporting someone means helping them focus on what they can do, celebrating good moments and encouraging them to continue enjoying life in ways that feel right for them.

Remember, even small moments of happiness matter.

 Ways I can encourage hope

- ☐ Celebrate small achievements.
- ☐ Encourage enjoyable activities.
- ☐ Spend quality time together.
- ☐ Support realistic goals.
- ☐ Focus on what they can do.
- ☐ Laugh together when the moment feels right.
- ☐ Encourage visits with family and friends.
- ☐ Other:

♥♥ Things that bring them joy

♥♥ One activity I can encourage this week

♥♥ My message of encouragement

Write a message you would like them to remember on difficult days.

Remember

Hope doesn't mean pretending everything is easy.

It means believing that meaningful moments, love and happiness can still exist alongside difficult times.

Your encouragement, patience and kindness can help someone continue living life with purpose and hope.

Focus on making memories, celebrating small victories and reminding them they are never alone.

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PAGE 8 – My Cancer Support Plan

Every person's experience of cancer is unique.

The best support comes from listening, respecting their wishes and adapting to their changing needs.

A personalised support plan can help you provide consistent, compassionate support while helping the person maintain their independence, dignity and quality of life.

What helps them most?

- ☐ Having someone to listen.
- ☐ Practical help with everyday tasks.
- ☐ Spending time together.

- ☐ Quiet time when needed.
- ☐ Gentle encouragement.
- ☐ Help getting to appointments.
- ☐ Keeping a normal routine where possible.
- ☐ Being treated the same as always.
- ☐ Other:

My Three Priorities

1.

2.

3.

People and Services That Can Help

1.

2.

3.

My Personal Reminder

When supporting someone living with cancer, I want to remember...

Remember

Supporting someone isn't about having all the answers.

It's about showing up with kindness, listening with compassion and reminding them that they don't have to face their journey alone.

Every act of care, no matter how small, can make a lasting difference.

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PAGE 9 – My Commitment as a Supporter

Congratulations on completing this workbook.

Supporting someone living with cancer is about more than helping with appointments or practical tasks.

It's about offering hope, kindness, patience and understanding through every stage of their journey.

Some days they may need encouragement. Other days they may simply need someone to sit quietly beside them.

Your presence matters.

I Will Remember To...

- ☐ Listen without judgement.
- ☐ Respect their choices.
- ☐ Be patient on difficult days.
- ☐ Offer practical help when needed.
- ☐ Encourage hope without pressure.
- ☐ Celebrate good days and small victories.
- ☐ Continue checking in regularly.
- ☐ Look after my own wellbeing too.

My Personal Reminder

When supporting someone living with cancer, I want to remember...

My Support Promise

"I will support this person with compassion, patience and kindness. I will respect their choices, encourage hope, listen without judgement and remind them they do not have to face this journey alone. I will continue to offer support in ways that help them feel valued, respected and cared for."

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Final Thoughts

Cancer can change many things, but it doesn't change a person's worth, their importance or their need for kindness and connection.

Your support, understanding and willingness to simply be there can bring comfort during difficult moments and hope for the days ahead.

Thank you for taking the time to learn how to provide compassionate support.

Explore more free workbooks, resources and wellbeing tools at:

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 Supporting people, families, carers and communities with compassion, hope and understanding.