Finding Help and Support

This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [1], November / 2011

Support for coping with cancer comes from different places, such as family, friends, other people with cancer, support groups, interactive websites, and health care professionals. Many teens with cancer find that they need different kinds of support throughout their cancer experience.

Talking with family and friends

Talking to someone you trust, such as a friend, teacher, or religious leader, can help you sort out what you're feeling and thinking. Remember that your friends and family, especially your parents, are often some of your best supporters.

Talking with other teenagers with cancer

Other teenagers with cancer understand how you're feeling and what you're worried about. In addition to providing emotional support, other teens with cancer may be able to offer suggestions for dealing with treatment side effects, school issues, and talking with your doctor. The following tips can help you get in touch with other teenagers with cancer:

- Talk with teenagers you meet at the hospital or treatment center
- Check your hospital or treatment center forsupport groups [2] for teens with cancer (a group of teenagers with cancer who meet on a regular basis to share their experiences and offer each other support)
- Find organizations [3] dedicated to helping people with cancer
- Check with otherwebsites for teenagers with cancer [4]
- Ask your nurse or doctor for recommendations

Connecting online

The Internet can be a great tool to connect with other teens with cancer through message boards, chat rooms, or online support groups. You can use the Internet anytime, and talking online is sometimes easier than talking in person, especially if you're talking about something difficult. Let your parents know before you start chatting online, and be careful about giving out personal information, such as your name, address, or telephone number. Some good places to start areTeens Living with Cancer [5] andGroup Loop [6].

Getting professional help

Even if you're getting support from your family and friends, a professional counselor, social worker, or therapist can help you and your family talk through your feelings about cancer. Most hospitals and treatment centers have mental health professionals who are trained to help teens cope with cancer. Ask your doctor to recommend a counselor who has experience in working with teenagers with cancer.

Write it down

When you don't feel like talking, writing can help. Some people write down thoughts, feelings, and dreams. Others draw or write stories or poems. You may want to create ajournal [7] or notebook just for this purpose.

More Information

Cancer in Teens [8]

Coping [9]

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/about-us
[2] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Publications+and+Resources/Support+and+Resource+Links/General+Cancer+Organizations+and+Resources/Support+Groups
[3] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Publications+and+Resources/Support+and+Resource+Links/Cancer-Specific+Resources
[4] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Teens/Resources+for+Teens
[5] http://www.teenslivingwithcancer.org/
[6] http://www.grouploop.org
[7] http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Quality+of+Life/Finding+Comfort+Through+Journaling

[8] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Teens
[9] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping