



# When someone you love is seriously ill

Family Support Services



When someone you love is seriously ill many things change and lots of the changes are out of your control.

### **Explain clearly, simply, slowly and honestly**

Young people have the same worries and anxieties as adults, but they may often struggle to verbalise them.

### **Keep young people informed as things change**

They will already be aware of tensions however hard you try to keep things/information hidden. Often when they are told what is happening it is a relief for all concerned, you no longer have to pretend that everything is normal anymore.

- ♥️ Remind young people it's not their fault.
- ♥️ Give hugs.
- ♥️ Give them space.
- ♥️ Talk about getting help and support for them.
- ♥️ Ask how they want to be involved.
- ♥️ Have fun and laugh together sometimes.
- ♥️ Decide together who the best person is to tell at school.

### **Keeping school informed**

- ♥️ Have a link/key person you talk to.
- ♥️ Help school to understand that home is a difficult and changing place at the moment.
- ♥️ Homework may sometimes not be completed on time.
- ♥️ Concentration may be difficult.
- ♥️ School and routines are important.
- ♥️ Understanding that the young person's needs will change as the illness changes.
- ♥️ They may need time out from class or a space to talk to someone.

## Do not be afraid to show your feelings

- ♥ Let young people know it is okay to cry, to be angry and okay to shut down.
- ♥ Do not push them away.
- ♥ Talk together.
- ♥ Spend time together.
- ♥ Routines/going to school/clubs are all important.
- ♥ Share how you are feeling, the good and difficult emotions, so they learn what is okay to express.

## Include the child/young people

- ♥ Ask them how they might like to help.
- ♥ Let them know when you are having treatment, chemotherapy or hospital appointments etc. Mark it on a calendar, coded so they understand why you are tired or reacting differently.
- ♥ Remind them of the special moments/funny times that you have shared.

## Recommended books

“The Secret C: Straight Talking About Cancer”  
Author -Julie A Stokes

NCB Stepping Stone Cards -  
[www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

Talking to children and teenagers when an adult has cancer -  
[www.be.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.be.macmillan.org.uk) - (MAC5766\_E04\_N)

Saint Francis Hospice staff are available to give counselling and support to you and your family.

**Please contact us for further advice or information on 01708 753319**

## About Saint Francis Hospice

Saint Francis Hospice provides care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to local people affected by life-limiting illnesses. As a registered charity, we rely on the financial support of our community to keep providing world class care free of charge to individuals and their families. Every year, we provide treatment, care and support to more than 4,000 local people affected by a life-limiting illness.

## Confidentiality

At Saint Francis Hospice we are committed to upholding your rights to confidentiality and protecting your privacy. We will treat your information with respect. Keep it secure and comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 including GDPR. Our privacy notice is available on request or by visiting our website [www.sfh.org.uk](http://www.sfh.org.uk)

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