



When someone you love is seriously ill

An information leaflet for adults to
support children and young people



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 -
childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Talking to children and teenagers when an adult has cancer -
be.macmillan.org.uk/be - (MAC5766_E05_N)

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

Please contact us for further advice or information on 01708 753319

About Saint Francis Hospice

Saint Francis Hospice, rated outstanding by the CQC, is an expert in providing care for people in our community with palliative and end of life care needs.

We provide support and care for any person from any faith or cultural background diagnosed with a serious life-limiting illness and living in Havering, Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge, Brentwood or parts of West Essex. Saint Francis Hospice has been offering expert, compassionate advice and support for over 40 years.

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

The Hall
Havering-atte-Bower
Romford
Essex RM4 1QH

Call: 01708 753319

Email: mail@sfh.org.uk

Visit: www.sfh.org.uk

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