

The diagnosis of cancer can change your life and the lives of people around you. Some of these changes will be temporary and some may be more long-lasting. These changes can happen with family, friends, and co-workers. For some, the changes will make the relationships stronger. In some cases, especially when relationships were already stressed, a cancer diagnosis can create additional problems. Let's face it—change is hard. You have had to face many changes in your life with cancer and undoubtedly you worry about how those changes impact your family, friends, and work or school colleagues.



[www.CancerSupportCommunity.org](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org)  
1-888-793-9355



## **ROLE CHANGES IN THE FAMILY, AT WORK, OR SCHOOL**

It is often said that cancer affects the whole family. Family and friends may need to take on new roles and responsibilities while you are going through treatment. For example, children might be asked to do different chores; a spouse or partner may need to find work to help pay bills; or a co-worker might need to take on some of your duties. People may have trouble adjusting to these new roles and you may have trouble giving up certain roles—even if only for a short while. All this can lead to distress that can cause worry and upset for you and your family.

## **ASKING FOR AND RECEIVING HELP**

Most of us are uncomfortable asking for and or receiving help from others. People close to you will likely want to help, but they might not know what you need or how to ask you. They may offer help with things that you want and can do yourself. Be specific, direct, and clear about what you need and try not to make assumptions about who will help and who will not. Prepare a list of tasks that people can do for you. This list can include anything: transportation to treatment, keeping you company while you recover from surgery, managing a project at work, dog walking, or communicating medical updates to others are a few examples. There are some very good free online scheduling tools that will help you (or someone else) coordinate the tasks and will allow you to get the help you need and want when you want it. Here are a few to explore.

- [www.mylifeline.org](http://www.mylifeline.org)
- [www.lotsahelpinghands.com](http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com)
- [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org)

## WORKPLACE ISSUES

It can be challenging to talk about your cancer in your workplace. Some companies are supportive of employees with cancer and do their best to accommodate for missed work days and shifting job responsibilities. Laws are in place to protect you if you are treated unfairly because of a cancer diagnosis or treatment. To receive job protection, you must tell your employer about your cancer. If you are worried about how to navigate cancer and the workplace, there are people who can help you.

- Visit Cancer Support Community, [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/employment-and-cancer](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/employment-and-cancer)
- Visit Cancer and Careers, [www.cancerandcareers.org](http://www.cancerandcareers.org), for more information.

## GOOD COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY

Without good communication, misunderstandings can happen. Everyone can become frustrated and feel isolated at a time when being connected and feeling supported is so important. No one can read your mind so it is important to let others know what you are thinking and feeling. It is also important to listen to others as they will have their own ideas and feelings about your diagnosis. Talking about feelings can be hard. Speak honestly and listen carefully. This can strengthen relationships at work, home, or school. If you are having a hard time talking with people, or if others don't seem to want to communicate with you, consider asking for help from a counselor, social worker, religious leader, or by joining a local support group.

# General Cancer Information, Survivorship & Support

**Cancer Support Community** • 888-793-9355 • [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org)

**American Cancer Society** • 800-227-2345 • [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

**CancerCare** • 800-813-4673 • [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org)

**Cancer.net** • 888-651-3038 • [www.cancer.net](http://www.cancer.net)

**Caregiver Action Network** • 855-227-3640 • [www.caregiveraction.org](http://www.caregiveraction.org)

**Healthcare.gov** • [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov)

**Livestrong Foundation** • 866-673-7205 • [www.livestrong.org](http://www.livestrong.org)

**National Cancer Institute** • 800-422-6237 • [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

**National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine** • 888-644-6226 • [www.nccam.nih.gov](http://www.nccam.nih.gov)

**Patient Advocate Foundation** • 800-532-5274 • [www.patientadvocate.org](http://www.patientadvocate.org)

## CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The Cancer Support Community's (CSC) resources and programs are available free of charge. Call 888-793-9355 or visit [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org) for more info.

**Cancer Support Helpline**<sup>®</sup>—Have questions, concerns or looking for resources? Call CSC's toll-free Cancer Support Helpline (888-793-9355), available in 200 languages Mon–Fri, 9 am–9 pm ET.

**Open to Options**<sup>®</sup>—Preparing for your next appointment? Our trained specialists can help you create a list of questions to share with your doctor. Make an appointment by calling 888-793-9355 or by contacting your local CSC or Gilda's Club.

**Frankly Speaking About Cancer**<sup>®</sup>—Trusted information for cancer patients and their loved ones is available through publications, online, and in-person programs.

[www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FranklySpeakingAboutCancer](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FranklySpeakingAboutCancer).

**Services at Local CSCs and Gilda's Clubs**—With the help of 170 locations, CSC and Gilda's Club affiliates provide services free of charge to people touched by cancer. Attend support groups, educational sessions, wellness programs, and more at a location near you. [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FindLocation](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FindLocation).

**MyLifeLine**—CSC's private, online community allows patients and caregivers to easily connect with friends and family to receive social, emotional, and practical support throughout the cancer journey and beyond. Connect with other caregivers by joining the Caregiver Support online discussion board. Sign up at [www.MyLifeLine.org](http://www.MyLifeLine.org).

**Grassroots Network**—Make sure your voice is heard by federal and state policy makers on issues affecting cancer patients and survivors by joining our Network at [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/become-advocate](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/become-advocate).

**Cancer Experience Registry**<sup>®</sup>—Help others by sharing your cancer patient or cancer caregiver experience via survey at [www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org](http://www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org).

The Cancer Support Community provides this information as a service. This publication is not intended to take the place of medical care or the advice of your doctor. We strongly suggest consulting your doctor or other health care professionals to answer questions and learn more.

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