



New England Coalition for Cancer Survivorship

30 Speen Street – Framingham, MA 01701

Phone: (508) 655-3329 e-mail: info@neccs.org www.neccs.org

Tips for the Caregiver(s)

- It is important for caregivers and immediate family members to take care of their health and other needs and maintain self-care strategies.
- Caregiving is very stressful. Explore and develop self-care strategies that work for you: meditation, prayer, diet, exercise, taking naps, imagery, excursions into nature, journaling and other creative forms of expression, etc.
- Say “yes” to offers of support. Say “no” to demands that might overwhelm or stress you. Stay aware of your limits.
- People who care want to help, but don’t always know what to do. Give friends and extended family a concrete list with specific tasks they can do to help such as grocery shopping, walking the dog, etc.
- Have someone come in to give you a short break from responsibility. If possible, a regularly scheduled time is best to give you a block of time you can count on.
- Establish a phone chain or utilize e-mail to keep people informed. This is particularly helpful during acute times.
- The caregiver is part of the team. Your knowledge of the patient is extremely important. Don’t be afraid to speak-up.
- Keep in mind that you and your spouse/partner will not always be on the same page at the same time. Keep the lines of communication open.
- Talk to others who understand what you are going through, such as other caregivers or a social worker.
- Often when the “crisis” or “treatment” is over and the survivor is doing better, the caregiver can let down a bit and will find they are exhausted and depressed.
- Do not be ashamed to ask your physician for an anti-depressant, an anti-anxiety drug or a sleep aid if you need it.
- Try to maintain as much normalcy in your life as possible during the various stages of the treatment/illness.
- Do the activities you enjoy whenever possible. (This is particularly important for getting through the tough times.)
- Remember- we all have an equal right to the best medical care available- as well as the right to be treated with respect.

Caregivers need to think about the impact of a cancer diagnosis on themselves.

Pace yourself.