

Resources for Talking with Children When a Parent is Ill

When a parent is diagnosed with a brain tumor, it is important that children be helped to understand what is happening in the family. Meeting their children's needs can be a particular challenge for parents, at a time when they are under stress from the illness. We have compiled a listing of resources that we hope will be of help to parents as they face this challenge. We welcome feedback and would appreciate your suggestions for other resources.

Books for Children and Teens

Because Someone I Love Has Cancer: Kid's Activity Book. American Cancer Society. A spiral bound book offering creative activities for children ages 6-12 to encourage the expression of feelings and coping skills as they deal with uncertainty and change. Removable Parent Guide. ACS, Atlanta, GA. 2002. To order contact ACS at 800-227-2345 or www.cancer.org

Hope the Bear. Lynnette Wilhardt, LCSW and Barbara Granoff, ACSW. This book will take you and your child through the cancer experience and explain the medical and emotional aspects of cancer and its treatment. Kids Konnected, Laguna Hills, CA. To purchase contact Kids Konnected at 800-899-2866 or www.kidskonnected.org

It Helps to Have Friends: When Mom or Dad Has Cancer. American Cancer Society. A booklet for grammar school-age children that addresses common fears and the social and emotional aspects children face when a parent has cancer. American Cancer Society. To order contact ACS at 800-227-2345.

Kemo Shark. H. Elizabeth King. A 16-page illustrated pamphlet that uses a shark character to help explain a parent's chemotherapy to children ages 4-10. Available in English and Spanish. Kidscope, Inc., Atlanta, GA. 1996. To request a free copy call 404-892-1437 or visit www.kidscope.org Electronic version can be downloaded at web site.

The Kids in Mrs. Hildebrand's Class. Linda Dallman. For ages 9-12. A class of first graders learns that their teacher is diagnosed with cancer. They find ways to support her through her surgery and treatment. During the school year the children learn what helping, humor and hugs can do to help in the healing process. A good book to help jump start a difficult conversation with children. Trafford Publishing, Victoria, Canada. 2006.



American Brain Tumor Association

2720 River Road Des Plaines, Illinois 60018
phone: 800-886-2282 write: info@abta.org visit: www.abta.org

Sharing Resources

Our Mom Has Cancer. Abigail and Adrienne Ackermann. Very simple book, written by two girls, ages 9 and 11, who share their thoughts and feelings concerning their mother's diagnosis with cancer. Follows the family's experiences throughout the various treatments. For children ages 5-12. American Cancer Society, Atlanta, GA 2001. To order contact ACS at 800-227-2345.

Sammy's Mommy Has Cancer. Sherry Kohlenberg and Lauri Crow (Illustrator). For children ages 3-8 to help the child understand the side effects of cancer treatment and to ease the child's fears about cancer. Provides a list of activities to involve the child in the parent's illness. Winner of the Rose Kushner Award of the AMA. Magination Press, Washington, DC. 1993.

Tickles Tabitha's Cancer-Tankerous Mommy. Amelia Frahm. For children ages 4-8. Tabitha's mom has cancer and she worries that she is not the same and will no longer play tickle Tabitha with her anymore. This book helps young children understand some of the changes a parent goes through with a cancer diagnosis including mood changes which can be difficult for children to understand. It is a realistic story of a family going through a serious illness without being scary and the illustrations help even the youngest children relate. Winner of the Benjamin Franklin Award. Nutcracker Publishing, Hutchinson, MN. 2001.

What about Me? How Teenagers Feel When Someone in the Family is Ill. Explores the impact a parent's illness can have on teenagers and ways to help teens cope. Cancer Family Care, Cincinnati, OH. Individual copies at no charge. To order contact Cancer Family Care at 513-731-3346 or www.cancerfamilycare.org

What is Cancer Anyway? Explaining Cancer to Children of All Ages. Karen Carney. Written by a RN and clinical social worker, this Book 5 in the Barklay and Eve series, provides basic information about cancer, radiation and chemotherapy to children in a calm and reassuring manner. The story is told through the eyes of the family's two dogs, Barklay and Eve. For children ages 4-8. Dragonfly Publications, Weathersfield, CT. 1998.

When Kids Ask. A pamphlet that offers assurance to children of all ages that they are not responsible for their parent's illness. Cancer Family Care, Cincinnati, OH. Individual copies at no charge. To order contact Cancer Family Care at 513-731-3346 or www.cancerfamilycare.org



American Brain Tumor Association

2720 River Road Des Plaines, Illinois 60018
phone: 800-886-2282 write: info@abta.org visit: www.abta.org

Sharing Resources

When Someone in Your Family is being treated for Cancer. National Cancer Institute. A booklet written for teens and young adults, who have a parent or sibling with cancer. Contains basic medical information about cancer, treatments and their side effects, and the emotional concerns of children. National Cancer Institute, Baltimore, MD. 1995. To request a copy call 800-422-6237 or visit www.cancer.gov Click "Cancer Topics."

When Your Parent Has Cancer: A Guide for Teens. National Cancer Institute. A booklet that offers information on cancer treatment, the ways teens can talk to family and friends, changes in the family, taking care of yourself and finding support. National Cancer Institute, Baltimore, MD Individual copies at no charge from the NCI at 800-422-6237 or www.cancer.gov

The Year My Mother Was Bald. Ann Speltz and Kate Sternberg (Illustrator). The tale of a fictional family's journey, as seen through the daughter's eyes. Written in the form of a journal by a girl, whose mother is undergoing treatment for cancer. For children ages 8-13. Contains drawings, photos and useful information. Offers reassurance to other children of the same age, who are going through a similar circumstance. Magination Press, Washington, DC. 2002.

Books for Parents

Can I Still Kiss You? Answering Your Children's Questions about Cancer. Neil Russell. Tells the story of a father with two sons ages 11 and 13. Chronicles the life changing impact on the father and his family. Offers a section that is an interactive journal to facilitate conversations between parents and their children. Contains a chapter by chapter series of questions and answers addressing diagnosis, symptoms and treatment that is understandable to children. Health Communications, Inc., Deerfield Beach, FL. 2001.

Cancer in the Family: Helping Children Cope with a Parent's Illness. Sue Heiney, Joan Hermann, Katherine Bruss and Joy Fincannon. A practical guide for helping children cope when a parent is ill. The authors bring expertise from the fields of psychology, social work and nursing to provide information on children's developmental stages from infancy through teenage years, and offer suggestions for helping children cope and understand in all stages of development. Includes help for addressing the needs of single-parent households, non-traditional families and households with special problems. Useful Resource Guide and removable workbook section for kids. American Cancer Society, Atlanta, GA. 2001.



American Brain Tumor Association

2720 River Road Des Plaines, Illinois 60018
phone: 800-886-2282 write: info@abta.org visit: www.abta.org

Sharing Resources

Helping Your Children Cope with Your Cancer: A Guide for Parents and Families (2nd Edition). Peter van Dernoort (Ed). Contains 28 essays written by professionals, parents and children, offering support, encouragement and useful suggestions, including information children's support groups. W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., Long Island City, NY. 2006.

How to Help Children through a Parent's Serious Illness. Kathleen McCue. A comprehensive book offering practical advice to assist families in helping children at different developmental levels cope through a parent's illness. St. Martin's Press, New York, NY. 1996.

Living With a Brain Tumor, Section on "Talking with Children." Available to patients and family members at no cost from the American Brain Tumor Association, Des Plaines, IL. 2007. To request, call ABTA at 800-886-2282 or visit www.abta.org

Raising an Emotionally Healthy Child When a Parent is Sick. Paula Rauch, MD and Anna Muriel, MD. Two Harvard psychiatrists offer advice on how to provide for children's emotional security when a parent is seriously ill. McGraw-Hill, Columbus, OH. 2005.

When a Parent Has Cancer: A Guide to Caring for Your Children/Becky and the Worry Cup. Wendy S. Harpham. A 2-book package, written by a physician who is also a parent and cancer survivor. Outlines approaches for preventing and responding to common problems, and offers advice on how to help children deal with anxiety. Important points for parents in bold for easy reading. Includes a chapter on teens.

Becky and the Worry Cup is an accompanying story book for children ages 8-12. Harper Collins, New York, NY. 2004.

Audiovisuals

Kids Tell Kids What It's Like When Their Mother or Father Has Cancer. Cancervive. Children talk about their hopes, fears and the adult burden placed on them when cancer strikes a parent. This award-winning 15-minute DVD documentary is for and by children, who have a parent with cancer, and encourages communication between family members. Can be ordered from Cancervive at 800-486-2873 or www.cancervive.org



American Brain Tumor Association

2720 River Road Des Plaines, Illinois 60018
phone: 800-886-2282 write: info@abta.org visit: www.abta.org

Sharing Resources

Parenting Through Cancer: How to Talk with Your Kids When You Have Cancer. This 60 minute DVD provides the basis for opening up healthy lines of communication, addressing family needs and providing tools for the family to become strengthened by the experience. A DVD companion booklet is also included which provides bulleted information for children from under five years of age through the teenage years. Available through the Angel Foundation, www.mnangel.org

We Can Cope: When A Parent Has Cancer. A set of three videos, including a manual for parents. Parent video features 7 parents talking about how their families coped. Teen video features a group of teenagers discussing their parent's cancer and how they coped. Child video features 3 young children expressing their feelings. Can be ordered from Inflexxion Inc., Newton, MA at 800-848-3895 or www.wecancope.com

ABTA Connections Pen Pal Program

A program to help support patients, caregivers, friends and family members by connecting them with others who are going through similar circumstances. Please call us if you would like to know how to be part of this program and be connected with other parents. You can also sign up online at www.abta.org/index.cfm?contentid=157

Online Support Resources

Below are online resources to help connect you with other parents or connect your children with other children who have a parent with a brain tumor. As a parent you will find it important to investigate any online resources for your child, especially regarding online rules and procedures, privacy policy and whether or not it is moderated. You will also need to give your permission for your child's participation.

BRAINTMR

www.braintrust.org/braintmrlist.htm

An online list open to anyone interested in brain tumors, benign or malignant.

BT Healthy Kids Online Support Group

www.braintrust.org/bthealthykids.htm

An online list for families where one member has a brain tumor and there are healthy active children.

Teens of Parent Survivors (TOPS)

www.braintrust.org/tops.htm

An online support group for teens who have a parent with a brain tumor.



American Brain Tumor Association

2720 River Road Des Plaines, Illinois 60018
phone: 800-886-2282 write: info@abta.org visit: www.abta.org

Sharing Resources

Face to Face Support Groups

Contact our office at 800-886-2282 or socialwork@abta.org if you would like to receive a listing of brain tumor support groups in your state. These groups are normally open to both patients and family members.

Organizations and Programs

American Cancer Society

800-227-2345

www.cancer.org

Offers a variety of literature and online discussion groups to explain cancer to children when a parent or family member is ill. Type “Helping Children” in search engine box.

CancerCare

800-813-4673

www.cancercare.org

Offers “CancerCare for Kids” a program to help children and teens when a parent has cancer, literature and telephone education workshops, and online support groups for children and teens facing cancer in their family.

Gilda’s Club

www.gildasclub.org

Offers “Noogieland” a program providing support and play activities for children who have cancer or who have a parent with cancer. Visit web site for the location of a Gilda’s Club in your area.

Kidskonnected

800-899-2866

www.kidskonnected.org

Offers support services for children aged 3 through teens, who have a parent with cancer. Services include monthly support group meetings for parents and children, summer camps, moderated chat room for ages 7-18, a quarterly newsletter, Teddy Bear Outreach program for younger children and a variety of books and resources for parents, children and teens. Publish a book, *Hope the Bear*, which will help you and your child through the cancer experience.



American Brain Tumor Association

2720 River Road Des Plaines, Illinois 60018
phone: 800-886-2282 write: info@abta.org visit: www.abta.org

Sharing Resources

National Cancer Institute

800-422-6237

www.cancer.gov/cancertopics

Offers a variety of literature for parents and children when a parent is ill. Click “Support and Resources.”

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice and does not provide advice on treatments or conditions for individual patients. All health and treatment decisions must be made in consultation with your physician (s), utilizing your specific medical information. The American Brain Tumor Association does not endorse any of the organizations listed or guarantee that individuals will qualify for the services they provide. Please contact each organization for their specific guidelines.

April 2010



American Brain Tumor Association

2720 River Road Des Plaines, Illinois 60018
phone: 800-886-2282 write: info@abta.org visit: www.abta.org

