



ASSISTING FAMILY MEMBERS

Helping Your Family Navigate a Breast Cancer Diagnosis A Quick Guide for Supportive Family Members

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- Read this guide to understand ways you can support your loved one.
- Use it as a reference during appointments, treatment planning, and everyday care.
- Share it with other family members or caregivers to coordinate support.
- Keep it handy for notes, questions, and reminders.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- **Listen actively:** Let your loved one express fears, concerns, or emotions without judgment.
- **Be present:** Sometimes, simply being there is the most comforting support.
- **Encourage professional help:** Suggest counseling, support groups, or therapy if needed.
- **Remember, you need support too!** Counseling, support groups, stress-relief programs, financial assistance and more may be available.

PRACTICAL HELP

- **Accompany** to appointments: Help with scheduling, transportation, and paperwork.
- **Track** medical information: Keep a notebook or folder with test results, medications, and doctor instructions.
- **Assist** with daily needs: Meal prep, childcare, or errands can reduce stress for the patient.

NAVIGATING TREATMENT & HEALTHCARE

- **Ask questions:** Help your loved one prepare questions for doctors.

Examples:

- What are the treatment options?
- What side effects should we expect?
- What follow-up care is needed?
- **Understand insurance and programs:** Learn about coverage, financial assistance, or programs like IBCCP or hospital charity care.
- **Coordinate care:** Keep track of appointments, labs, and referrals.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PATIENT

- Reach out to a CHW for support and navigation.
- Respect their decisions about care and privacy.
- Ask before giving advice or sharing information.
- Check in regularly, but allow space for rest and processing.

QUICK TIPS

- Keep a central folder for all medical documents.
- Use calendar reminders for appointments and medication schedules.
- Write down questions before appointments so nothing is forgotten.
- Encourage your loved one to ask their care team for resources about counseling, transportation, and financial assistance.