



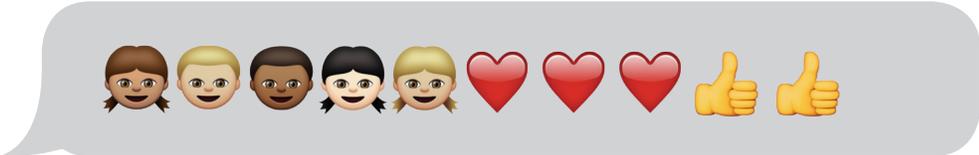
It Helps to Have Friends When Mom or Dad Has Cancer



This book belongs to



It Helps to Have Friends was originally written by American Cancer Society Minnesota Division volunteer Carol Lindberg.



Hi. I am David. 😊



My story begins when my dad got cancer. He didn't feel like throwing football with me or taking me to practice. He spent a lot of time in bed, and my mom looked worried all the time. Sometimes she told me not to make so much noise because Dad was resting.

He didn't feel like throwing 🏈 with me or taking me to practice. 😞

One day I felt really unhappy. I got a failing grade on a math test, and the teacher sent a note home. Mom and Dad asked me if something was wrong, and I told them that I was worried about Dad and the cancer.

Mom and Dad said they would try to help. They got some special books that told about cancer, and we read them together. We found out that cancer means that some of the cells in the body are growing too fast, and there are too many of them. Cancer cells are crazy. They don't do the jobs they're supposed to do. But doctors and nurses can help. They give people with cancer treatments like medicines, surgery, or radiation. Doctors are always finding new ways to help cancer patients get well.

Doctors are always finding new ways to help people with cancer get well. 💪

The kids club meets at the hospital on Wednesday after school.



After we read these books, Dad called his doctor and found out that there's a kind of club for kids whose moms or dads have cancer. The club meets at the hospital on Wednesdays after school. That's how I got to know my new friends Jan, Rick, and Maria. Mrs. Franklin is our club leader. We ask questions about cancer – what cancer is, what kind of medicine can help, and what's going to happen to our moms and dads.

My dad  is having radiation to help get rid of cancer in his lung.



Jan

We were surprised that there are so many different kinds of cancer. Jan's dad is having radiation to help get rid of cancer in his lung. Rick's mom just had surgery for cancer of the colon. The surgeon had to take out part of her intestines. Maria's mother had cancer in her breast, and she had surgery, too. My dad is taking medicine at the hospital for leukemia, a cancer of the blood. His cancer medicine is called chemotherapy.

My  mom just had surgery for cancer of the colon. 



Rick

Mrs. Franklin tells us that every patient is different. People with the same kind of cancer often get different kinds of treatment. The doctors have to figure out the best way to get rid of cancer for each person. Sometimes patients don't feel very good after cancer treatment, but they know that they need it to get well.

Every time we meet at our club, we talk about how we feel. Knowing that Jan, Rick, and Maria are scared, too, makes me feel better. I remember the very first meeting when we all asked questions about cancer.

Jan wanted to know what causes cancer. Mrs. Franklin said, “Cancer is something like a mystery. We know that normal cells get out of control, but we don’t know all the clues yet about what makes this happen. Scientists are studying and learning more each day.”

Can we catch cancer from people who have it? 😞



Maria

Maria asked, “Can we catch cancer from people who have it?” “No,” said Mrs. Franklin, “cancer is not contagious like a cold or flu. One person cannot give it to another. It’s OK to touch your parents and be close to them.”

No, cancer is not contagious like a cold or flu. 🚫 🧑‍⚕️



Mrs. Franklin

Rick looked sad. He said he had been wondering if his mom might die because of cancer. Mrs. Franklin put her arm around Rick and said, “I’m glad you ask about things that worry you. Sometimes people who have cancer die. But the doctors think they can help your mom live a long time. When cancer is under control, we call that patient ‘in remission.’ If cancer cells start to grow again, we can use different medicines and treatments.”



We don’t know all the clues yet about what causes cancer. Scientists are studying and learning more each day.

Be sure you ask your parents how things are going. They will let you know so you don't have to guess. 🙌💪



Mrs. Franklin said, “Be sure you ask your parents how things are going. They will let you know so you don't have to guess.”

One Wednesday we had a special meeting with doughnuts and hot chocolate. Mrs. Franklin introduced us to two other kids.

She said, “This is John and Debbie. John's dad and Debbie's mom were patients in this hospital last year. John and Debbie said they would like to talk to you about what happened to them.”

It was hardest in the beginning. When I was told my mom had cancer, I was really scared. 😨



Debbie

Debbie started talking first. “It was hardest in the beginning. When I was told my mom had cancer, I was really scared. Then she told me that it would be tough, but she would get better. I didn't like it when she cried some days. It made me feel sad, too. She said my hugs always made her feel good.”

Sometimes Mom was just too tired to do things with me. That made me 😡 ! 💔



“Sometimes Mom was just too tired to do things with me. That made me mad! We made a deal. She promised we could do something special together on ‘good days,’ and I helped her on the ‘bad days.’ ”

John said, “That was the part I hated. You never knew what to expect! Things would be just like normal and then suddenly – bang! – there was a problem, and my dad was in the hospital again. Mom would be upset, and Grandma had to come and help take care of us kids so Mom could be with Dad. It just wasn’t the same.

“I had trouble at school. I once got into a fight because of the way I was feeling inside. I even felt like maybe Dad’s cancer was my fault because I wasn’t always good. Finally Mr. Anderson, our school counselor, asked me to tell him what was happening. It really helped to talk about it. He had me draw some pictures about Dad’s cancer and our family. He told me it wasn’t my fault that Dad got cancer. You can’t cause it to happen to someone.”

... it wasn’t my fault that Dad got cancer. You can’t cause it to happen to someone. 😊 ✌️



John

He helped me see that illness changes things in a family, but it can make a family strong, too.



“He helped me see that illness changes things in a family, but it can make a family strong, too. We could still have good times. Our family was good about talking things over, but I discovered that it helped me to have my own private journal. I felt better when I could write down my thoughts.”

I felt better when I could write down my thoughts.



That’s how I met Jan, Rick, and Maria – and how we tried to help each other. I told Mrs. Franklin I was writing this book, and she said to tell all the kids whose mothers or fathers have cancer that there are lots of grownups who can help. There are moms and dads, schoolteachers, school nurses, someone you like at your church or temple, and, of course, all your friends and relatives.

I hope some of the things we talked about will help you. I hope you have somebody to talk to about your thoughts and questions. It really helps. Maybe you’ll want to write down or draw things like Debbie and John. I hope reading this book has helped you, and I wish you and your family good times and good health.



People I can talk to:



Questions I want to ask:





Space to draw pictures:





It's hard to have a parent with cancer! But there are things that can help you during this time.

Here you can find out some of the things kids worry about and go through. We'll also tell you about some things that may help you deal with cancer in your family.

For the latest cancer information, day-to-day help, and emotional support, visit the American Cancer Society website at **www.cancer.org** or call us at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.



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