



# Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

## TIPS FOR TEENS WHEN A PARENT HAS CANCER

### **Help out around the house**

Be supportive of your parent's illness by taking on some chores around the house (ex. helping to cook dinner, mowing the lawn, dropping your siblings off at practice if you are old enough to drive).

### **Talk about things you are doing**

Parents may not always want to be reminded that they have cancer. Share what is going on at school and in other parts of your life. This might be a welcome change of topic.

### **Take time for yourself**

Take time to care for yourself. You need to go to school, eat well, get as much physical activity as possible, see your friends, and get enough sleep so you will be able to deal with things effectively.

### **Express yourself**

Writing in a diary can help you express yourself as you deal with your parent's illness. Sometimes you can use art or writing to describe your feelings or experiences. Talking might be more your style. Share your feelings with your parents, or another adult, or a friend you can trust.

### **Communicate with each other**

Ask your parent how they are feeling and share what you can about how you are feeling. Perhaps if they are feeling too ill or tired, you can spend time together watching TV or a movie.

### **Massages are good**

If a parent has been in bed or has spent time visiting with guests, they may benefit from a shoulder or back massage from you. This is also a good way for you and your parent to be closer.

### **Share some music**

Make a CD or an mp3 playlist of relaxing music. One side could be jazz music and the other side could be classical music (ex. Mozart, Bach, Beethoven).