

WHAT DO I SAY?

**A GUIDE FOR TEENS
WHO KNOW SOMEONE
WITH CANCER OR
ANOTHER SERIOUS
ILLNESS.**



REMEMBER:

“Cancer is
NOT contagious”

NOT contagious

“Your friendship
matters”

friends
Matter

“I realize you miss
the “old” me;
I miss that me too.”

I miss that
me too

IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Mikaela Rae Clifford
Brain Tumor, age 12

Brittany Romero
Ewing’s sarcoma, age 17

Tom Zelko
Leukemia, age 12



Text provided by teens whose lives have forever been altered by a cancer diagnosis and its treatment.

Designed by: Jaguar Design Studio

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& Wendy Romero

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“Live and Love it Up” Foundation
and Printworx

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DO'S AND DON'TS FOR FRIENDS OF TEENAGE CANCER PATIENTS

SUGGESTIONS FROM TEENS ON:

- How to include me,
- How not to forget me,
- How to help me feel like I still matter to you.

One of the main challenges faced by the 7,000 teens who are diagnosed with cancer annually is the loss of connections with their friends and some family members.

Frequent hospitalizations and the debilitating side effects of treatment often prevent a teen from participating in school, social and family events.



DO

Do treat me as you used to. I'm still the same person you've always known, even though my body may be going through temporary physical changes.

—Age 16, acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL)

Do offer to come over and spend time with me at home or in the hospital. You could just sit and watch a movie even if you don't know what to say.

—Age 13, Ewing's sarcoma

Do tell me if you are uncomfortable seeing me in the hospital or if you just don't like the hospital. It is very important that I don't feel you are avoiding me personally.

—Age 18, brain tumor

Do ask if I want to talk about my treatment. Sometimes I need to talk.

—Age 15, chronic myeloid leukemia (CML)

Do be patient with me. I am processing a lot of feelings.

—Age 17, renal cancer

Do think of me as "a person who has cancer," not a "cancer person."

—Age 19, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL)

Do your best to be positive around me. It'll make both of us feel better.

—Age 16, osteosarcoma

DON'T

Don't give up on our relationship either during or after treatment.

—Age 15, acute myeloid leukemia (AML)

Don't assume that once treatment is over everything is okay and that it is all behind me because it definitely is not.

—Age 20, germ cell tumor

Don't be afraid to ask about my health or my treatment.

—Age 14, Hodgkin's disease

Don't be shy just because you don't know what to say about my cancer.

—Age 13, rhabdomyosarcoma

Don't think that cancer is contagious.

—Age 12, acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL)

Don't procrastinate. By the time you give our relationship priority, I could be dead.

—Age 17, Ewing's sarcoma

Don't be left with the thought, "If I'd known you were going to die, I would have spent more time with you."

—Age 21, malignant melanoma

"I'M STILL THE SAME PERSON"

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