

Parenting with Cancer: Real Talk from a Parent Who's Been There

Having cancer or caring for someone with cancer is extremely hard. Parenting young children while navigating cancer can be nearly impossible.

CHESTER, NJ, UNITED STATES, October 6, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Having cancer or caring for someone with cancer is extremely hard. Having to deal with that on top of parenting young children can be near impossible.



One major issue many face, is how and when to explain their cancer diagnosis to their children. Support Volunteer Robbie had this to say on the topic:

“When I was diagnosed with BC during 2005, our girls were 9 (4th grade) and 7 (first grade). My biggest concern was not worrying them. I took many a phone call in my bathroom with the water running where I was sure I would have privacy. I limited who I told before I told my kids and anyone I told about my diagnosis I included, ‘When you see me with my girls around there will be absolutely no sad faces, tears or looks of concern.’ Basically, I let people know in no uncertain terms that if they scared our kids, I’d never speak to them again. A well-meaning close friend sent me flowers after I told her of my diagnosis. I quickly hid the flowers in the attic so the kids wouldn’t see them.”

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*Cancer survivor volunteer
Robbie*

“After seeking advice on what to say to my girls, I settled on telling them only the truth and only what they could absorb. Some people suggested I not use the word “cancer” but in the end I decided I wanted them to hear the word from me, not hear or overhear it from someone else. Once I knew that I was having surgery and that it would be followed by chemo, I choose to tell the kids. I didn’t have my husband there when I told them because I didn’t want to give it too

much weight. I remember it very clearly. The girls were sitting in the kitchen having a snack in the afternoon and I told them I found out I had breast cancer and that the doctor said I would be fine and that I would need an operation and then some medicine that was going to make me feel yucky and look funny for a while. My older daughter said, "But mommy, millions of women die each year from breast cancer." My reply, "Not me. I will be fine, that's why I'm having the operation and the medicine". She replied, "well then, we will have to do those fundraiser walks when you are done!" (Aside... when she was 16, we did the 39-mile Avon walk with friends)."

"That night, my younger daughter got out of the shower crying and said "mommy, I wish this were just a bad dream." I reassured her that I would be ok and that she could ask me anything she wanted anytime."

"Once I let the girls know, I contacted their teachers to let them know (reiterating my "no sad face rule") and asking them to please let me know if they saw any signs of distress or distraction at school."

What worked for Robbie and her girls may be the perfect roadmap for some cancer patients. Or it might not. Each situation, like each family and each diagnosis, has its own particulars and nuance. Which is where connecting with a Support Volunteer mentor who understands can be helpful. Our matches are always individualized, always free and always confidential – and can be scheduled for a convenient time.

To be matched with a [cancer survivor or cancer caregiver Support Volunteer](#) like Robbie or another mentor who's had a similar journey parenting with cancer visit cancerhopenetwork.org/support.

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