When someone we love is coping with cancer, communication may be difficult for everyone involved. Stress, anxiety, and depression can make communication hard for you and your loved ones. These suggestions may help families communicate:

**When Communicating**

- Be patient with yourself and others.
- Allow for mistakes and be forgiving.
- Own what is yours. If you feel uncomfortable, you can decide whether to talk about it or let it go.
- Avoid gossip. Speak first-hand and directly with family members.
- Ask permission to vent.
- Use “I” messages. Give specific examples such as “I feel... when...”.
- Listen carefully. Be willing to see other points of view.
- Offer regular updates to family members about a loved one’s condition.
- Use tools such as e-mails, webpages, and the telephone to make information available to everyone.
- Change can be difficult, so be open to encountering some discomfort.

**When Making Decisions**

- Include all who will be affected.
- Communicate relevant information early on.
- Offer time frames when possible.
- Consider both group and individual needs.
- Assume every family member is operating with good intentions.
- Trust family members and close friends.
- Respect each other and praise success.

**When Dealing With Conflict**

- Stay focused on the present. Don’t bring up issues from the past.
- Listen carefully.
- Try to see other points of view.
- Consider all perspectives so everyone involved can feel their ideas and opinions are valued.
- Avoid judging and labeling right or wrong.
- Try to understand the feelings of people who judge or find fault.
- Take a time-out or suggest talking later if the conflict is getting worse.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help.
- Look for a compromise. If a solution is unavailable, work on letting go.

Huntsman Cancer Institute’s Patient and Family Support team is a resource for more information about communicating with loved ones.

Our team is available Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

To learn more or make an appointment, call 801-585-9755.

www.huntsmancancer.org/pfs