

# Long-Distance Caregiving

**For some people, caregiving can come in “untraditional” ways. Many people living with cancer have caregivers who live far away. A long-distance caregiver can still be a major part of their loved one’s care. This fact sheet covers:**

- The emotional support you can give
- Ways to give practical support
- Making sure to help yourself



## Supporting Your Loved One

When you do not live near your loved one, you can still stay in contact. By phone, text, email or streaming video such as Facetime or Zoom, you can offer support and an ability to listen.

**Stay in touch and available to talk about difficult subjects.** Your loved one will feel supported when you keep up with their personal and emotional needs. Let them choose whether they want to talk about difficult issues. Try to be open to changes in their thoughts and moods.

**It is often nice to simply talk.** Every conversation does not have to be about heavy issues. You can support your loved one emotionally by talking about favorite things. You can simply talk about things that make you both happy.



## Providing Practical Help

Caregivers can also help with many practical tasks on the medical side of their loved one’s care.

**You can coordinate medical appointments and records.** By phone or other forms of communication, you can still get to know their health care team, help schedule appointments, and more.

**Help with questions.** With your loved one, you can list questions to ask their doctors. If you are able to join appointments by phone or streaming, you might help ask these questions.

**You can help with everyday tasks.** Your loved one may need help managing household bills or finances, organizing legal paperwork or finding resources. These are things you can do from wherever you are.

**Help getting local support.** Even from far away, you can arrange friends, family members and others near your loved one to help. They may want to help, but not know how



## Caring for Yourself

Long distance caregivers often struggle with feelings of guilt. They often wish that they could do more for their loved one with cancer. Remind yourself of all that you are doing, rather than focusing only on what you can't do.

**Give yourself credit for what you do.** Despite living far away, you are still capable of doing a great deal for your loved one. Understand that your role is very important.

**Long-distance caregivers need support too.** Try to keep track of your own needs. It is important to take care of yourself emotionally in order to help your loved one. You should also keep up with your own health appointments. A support group is a unique opportunity to meet and interact with other people who can understand your experience. All of CancerCare's support groups are led by professional oncology social workers who counsel people affected by cancer.

### CancerCare® Can Help

Founded in 1944, CancerCare is the leading national organization providing free support services and information to help people manage the emotional, practical and financial challenges of cancer. Our comprehensive services include resource navigation, counseling and support groups over the phone, online and in-person, educational workshops, publications and financial and co-payment assistance. All CancerCare services are provided by master's-prepared oncology social workers and world-leading cancer experts.

To learn more, visit [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org) or call **800-813-HOPE (4673)**.

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*This fact sheet is supported by the Anna Fuller Fund, Bristol Myers Squibb and a grant from Genentech.*