



AYA

Words of Wisdom



RELATIONSHIPS • WORK • FRIENDS • SCHOOL





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Hi! Welcome - we never thought we would be here either. This information comes to you from teens and young adults who have been in your shoes. We put together some tips we have learned along the way to help guide you through treatment. We hope you find them helpful.

Tips for processing your diagnosis

- » Take it day by day or even moment by moment. It's not a sprint, but a marathon. Take it one step at a time.
- » It's ok not to be ok. Cancer sucks.
- » Don't isolate yourself. Allow people to help you. It's not weak to ask for help.
- » Remember, your diagnosis is not your fault. Don't feel guilty about it (if you do, talk with someone on your care team).
- » The journey is a rollercoaster—you'll have your ups and downs. Making it through the bad days make the good days that much better.
- » A lot of things are going to change from the way you look to your day to day schedule. Try to keep up with your normal activities as much as you can, but know it will be different for a while.



Your Inner Circle

Friends: Your diagnosis will also affect your friends and other close relationships. When you are ready, don't be afraid to ask for what you need from them—they may want to help, but often don't know how. Try to be patient with your friends...they may not understand what you are going through. It's ok to tell people you need your space, too.

Parents/Caregivers: They are just trying to help (even if it's annoying). They may be very nervous—this is hard on them, as well. Tell them how they can help, and tell them what is not as helpful. Let them be the “bad guy” for you if you don't want to do something or see someone. Reassure them when you are feeling ok, and don't be afraid to tell them when you're not. When you can, show your appreciation.

Siblings: Ask your siblings what they want to know about your journey. They may feel very out of the loop. Your parents may need to be more focused on you right now, so ask your siblings how they are doing.

School or Work: Your peers may be wondering what you are going through and where you have been. Tell those closest to you what you would like them to pass along to the larger community.

How to deal with appointments and hospital stays

Come to the hospital expecting that you are going to wait. There are spaces for teens and young adults—check them out. The activities in there can help pass the time or bring things from home to do.

Write down any questions you may have prior to your clinic visits.

Find something good to watch.

Pack a bag and leave it in the car for every clinic visit, just in case you have to stay.

Bring snacks. There are snacks in clinic, but you can bring your own food, too.

Don't be afraid to ask for something you really want—there may be a way to make it happen.

Nothing is set in stone. Be prepared to stay longer than expected. Your care team just wants to make sure you are ok before you go home. Better safe than sorry.

The hospital is very different from home, but it gets easier with time. Transitions in and out can be tough. The team knows you want to be home and do their best to make it happen.

Makes sure you have all the information you need before discharge. Ask questions when you have them.

There is always a doctor on call 24/7 if urgent questions or concerns come up. You are never alone or without help.



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