

# Clinician Follow Up Reference for Supportive Care

## Family/Caregiver Concerns –

### “YES” to Concerns about my children

Start With Asking the patient the below questions	Approach	Next Step	Timing
<p>What are your specific concerns about your children?</p> <p>How old are your children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If young, who is their primary caregiver?</li> </ul> <p>Do they know about your illness? If so, what do they know?</p> <p>Are you too sick to care for your children?</p>	<p>If the children are not aware of the illness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discuss the concerns about disclosing</li> <li>If wanted, develop or share a plan how to discuss with children, how their lives are being impacted and/or will be impacted. (See links below)</li> </ul> <p>Is there an increase in problematic behaviors since learning about the illness? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not enjoying what they typically have enjoyed prior to diagnosis?</li> <li>asking for repeated reassurances?</li> <li>clingier than before?</li> <li>changes in their sleep &amp; appetite?</li> <li>Has their performance in school changed?</li> </ul> <p>If exhibiting, document in patient EMR that states children are not coping well/displaying problematic behavior.</p> <p>If patient feels that they are too sick to care for their children, ask the patient if they need help with caregiving arrangements for their children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How would you feel about sharing this concern with your family, friends, community groups or faith community as a way to seek support?</li> </ul> <p>If there is a negative effect on the children’s schooling, suggest patient have a discussion with the teacher and/or school social worker.</p>	<p>Refer as applicable to: Child life specialist, counselor, social worker, cancer resource / support center resources or chaplains.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can assist with family discussions</li> <li>May be able to assist with temporary caretaking resources</li> <li>Can offer additional help and support</li> <li>Can schedule an appointment for assessment with counselor or social worker if children are not coping well/displaying problematic behaviors</li> </ul> <p>If the children are displaying problematic behaviors, a referral to family/child specific psychosocial services may be considered.</p> <p>Share Patient Links and Handouts as appropriate</p> <p>See Reference Link Below</p>	<p><b>Discuss same day if possible</b></p> <p><b>Acute – within 24 hours if interfering with care</b></p> <p><b>Routine - within 1 week if not interfering with care</b></p>

## Notes

**Stages I-III:** Cancer Support Centers often have programs and services to help families. See Reference links below for information on how to talk to children about a loved one’s cancer.

**Stage IV:** For single parents proper legal paperwork is need to determine custody plans for children under the age of 18 for when a parent is no longer able to care for the children. Patients may need help in securing legal assistance.

## Patient Links and Handouts:

- [American Cancer Society, Helping Children When a Family Member Has Cancer](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Talking With Your Children](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Talking With Family and Friends](#)
- [NIH, Talking to Children about Your Cancer](#)
- [CancerCare, Helping Children Understand Cancer: Talking to Your Kids About Your Diagnosis](#)

**CSOC Patient Handout can be accessed at:**

<http://cancer-help.me/children>

## References:

- [The ASCO Post, Helping Patients Talk to Their Children About Cancer, Paula K. Rauch, MD](#)
- [CANCERCare® Online Support Groups](#), share with patient/family/caregiver if clinician considers appropriate