

TALKING TO THE LITTLES

One of the hardest things that we face once diagnosed with breast cancer is telling our kids. Many parents wonder if they should even tell their kids.

**My answer, yes. Yes, you should.
(Here's a blog post on it if you're curious as to why I feel this way.)**

**One of Trauma's Greatest Missed Opportunities
(choicecoaching.org)**

The bottom line is this: when there is intention in the way you involve your children in your diagnosis, many amazing gifts and lessons can occur. You have the ability to teach your kids amazing lifelong healthy coping skills in real life when you include them in your journey.

**Sounds great, I know!
So let's get you started on finding a way to share your cancer news with your kids that works for you and your family.**

****This worksheet is designed to get you started on your journey, not as a one-size-fits-all solution. If you need further help please contact me for a free consultation and together we'll figure out the next best steps for you****

Keep It Simple

- Kids are smart AF. No need to overcomplicate.
- Simply and clearly state what you want to say, and what details you want to give (I also recommend using real terms - ie: cancerous tumor vs “a bad meatball” when possible. We want to empower our kids and this includes using real terms to lessen the negative impact words can have on us).

Write some ideas of what and how you want to tell your kids in a simple and clear way.

Listen To Yourself

- Listen to your gut and trust it when you tell them, how much you tell them, and in the way you tell them.
- Remember, there is no one solution; there is only the best solution for you and your kiddos.
- Your inner voice almost always leads you in the right direction. Trust it.

What does your intuition tell you? Be specific.

Pay Attention To Each Individual Kid's Needs

- Every person is different.
- Speak to each kid in the manner and tone that works best for them.
- No one knows your kids better than you do, so work from there.

What needs or tendencies does each child have? Be specific.

Have A Safe Space For Them To Feel Their Feelings

- This could be with you or this could be with someone else (school counselor? Trusted friend?).
- A safe space should include a lack of judgment, loose time constraints, and no unsolicited advice (when talking, you can ask them if they want to “vent” or “get solutions” to avoid frustrations).

**Where/Who
can be a safe
space for each
of your
children?**

Show Vulnerability

- Kids learn through modeling and we want our kids to know that all emotions are valid and respected.
- When our kids see us cry, get scared and then “bounce back” they are learning that it is ok and healthy to feel all emotions.
- Seeing vulnerability in you will empower them to be ok with their own vulnerability.

**In what ways
can you safely
share your
vulnerability?
What does this
look like?**

Allow Them To Ask Questions

- Kids can often come up with worst case scenarios in their minds when they are left to their own devices.
- Be a safe place for questions throughout the entire process.
- Answer as honestly as you can, and without shame, anger, or judgment.

How do you want to react to questions? What bottom-line understanding or feeling do you want them to take away from the conversation?

Celebrate With Them

- Whether it's because you got some good scan results, or you found your first new hair after chemo, celebrations are so important!
- Celebrations encourage gratitude and hope as well as highlight positivity in darker times.
- This will also be a great skill for them to carry on to their own future.

What are some fun and easy ways to celebrate with your kids and family? Small celebrations? Big celebrations?

Check In With Them – Even Down The Line

- Kids aren't always going to start conversations about feelings, so it's helpful to check in with them once in a while.
- Check-ins can happen while taking a walk, making art, or at any other time.
- It doesn't have to be a sit down intense talk (it's actually often better that it's not), just a safe space to check-in.
- Circle back even years after your diagnosis and talk to your kids about their feelings around your cancer, what they learned from it, and what they can still learn from it.

What are some ways to check in with your kids? As a group or as individuals?

Get Help When You Need It

- There is no shame in getting help. Oftentimes, the sooner we get help, the better.
- Decide what exactly you are needing help with before you reach out. This will help narrow down the correct type of external help.
- Help comes in all forms - need to contact your pediatrician about emotional developmental stages? A school counselor for extra resources? A coach or counselor to help your emotions through all of this? Get specific.
- You don't have to do this all alone.

**What are you
needing help
in, specifically?
Who can you
contact?**

Remember, cancer affects everyone in the family. Which I know, isn't ideal. But! We can't change the fact that it happened. However, we can use it as an opportunity to grow and prepare our children for their emotional futures by guiding them in healthy ways.

Trust me, it really can be a gift.

You are doing great, you can do this, and you are not alone.

**XOXX
~Adriana**