

Tips for Being a Good Buddy

Finding compassion and support from someone going through a similar cancer experience can have a lasting effect. The purpose of the following tips are to provide those interested in the Lymphoma Support Network buddy program with the necessary information to be effective in their role as a buddy. This will increase the quality of the interaction, and subsequently, the satisfaction of the person both giving and receiving support.

Be ready to contact your buddy as soon as you have received the confirmation with your buddy's contact information.



Make your intentions clear. Although the Coordinator will try to make the best quality match, the intentions of the participants may differ. It may be important to let your buddy know ahead of time what you would like to get out of this match, whether it is short-term communication to learn about a certain type of treatment and/or long-term communication to establish a mutual friendship. If you would like to have ongoing contact, it might help to establish how often you would like to communicate with each other.



The program should be a fulfilling experience and one in which you feel comfortable taking part. If, for any reason, you feel uncomfortable giving and/or receiving support, please do not hesitate to let the Coordinator know. For example, the needs of your buddy may go beyond the scope of this program and what you feel you can handle. Every effort will then be made to re-match you with an individual who is more appropriate.



It may take time to discover the type of relationship you and your buddy will have. You may or may not establish a mutual friendship. Either way, support in any form is always beneficial to both parties.



If at anytime you feel that your needs have changed, you always have the option of being re-matched with another. Both you and the Coordinator can work together to find the most beneficial arrangement.



You and your buddy may not deal with issues regarding your lymphoma and/or treatments the same way. Be respectful of those differences.



We all need to feel valued. A good way to accomplish this is to let your buddy know that what he or she is saying is important. Try restating the person's feeling briefly, but accurately. Encourage the other person to continue talking. You can do this by asking more detailed questions about the issue being discussed.



Try validating your buddy's concerns. An issue your buddy may be dealing with may not be something that would concern you. Listening patiently to what the other person has to say, even though you may not believe it is important or relevant, can be an effective validating technique. You can still indicate encouragement and acceptance, without necessarily agreeing, perhaps by injecting an occasional "really" or "I see".



Sometimes, just listening can be the best medicine.