



Words of Empowerment for Family Caregivers

(...from those who have been through it)

1. The way I feel about my child's illness is the right way to feel. I might be mad, sad, numb, frustrated, fearful or anxious. Or all of them. This is common and may come and go in unexpected waves. And that's okay. I can share these feelings with others, which may help.
2. Since this may be one of the hardest issues I've ever faced, I'm going to allow myself the gift of time to process the information, even if it takes months.
3. I know my child the best! And since I am the best advocate for him/her, I am going to feel comfortable speaking up and asking questions of any provider or staff member. I will listen to my gut instincts and inner wisdom, and be confident as a partner with the medical team.
4. I realize that my environment, whether it's the hospital room or my home, can be a gathering place for the people my child loves. It can also be an island of calm. I know I can limit visitors, technology or phone calls to help heal.
5. I am not alone. Many people want to help me. In addition to family and friends, I can reach out to chaplains, social workers, child life specialists and parent mentors. They will listen with their knowledge and hearts.
6. I will not get hung up on what I can't control. Instead, I will focus on what I can control. I will stay in the present moment.
7. I get to be the author of my own story, and will resist comparing my story to someone else's. I also understand that not everyone in my circle of family and friends will know how to react or what to say, but I will not let that stop me from expressing clearly what I need from them.
8. I will be kind to myself. I know that it's important to take some self-care moments while on this journey. It is okay for me to take a break and get some food, walk around, or take a break in a quiet place. I will be intentional about taking time to just breathe and center myself.
9. Even if I doubt it sometimes, I am strong and resilient and will get through this.
10. I love and care for my child and will remind him/her through my words and actions. I will also choose to love and take care of myself as well.