



Tips for Your Team

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Even with the best intentions, the words or actions of others can sometimes miss the mark and in effect cause more harm than good and leave the family feeling misunderstood, overwhelmed or even hurt. This doesn't usually come from a lack of care but rather from discomfort, uncertainty or the desire to "make it better." Knowing and internalizing this can help you respond with grace and hopefully, by communicating these tips to your team, you can help your supporters approach your circumstances with more awareness. In this final section, you will find many printable resources to complete and distribute so that everyone is on the same page.

HELP NEEDED:



Using the results of your Needs Assessment, fill out this form to help your team know what will serve you best.

Household Cleaning:

Laundry Support:

Lawn Care:

Dog Walking:

Package Patrol:

Meals:

Errands:

Rides:

Childcare:

HELP NEEDED:



Homework Help:

Mentoring:

Respite:

Financial Liason:

Family Wellness:

The Family Team

WHO'S WHO

LOCAL LEAD

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

FINANCIAL LIASON

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Email: _____

VOLUNTEER

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Role Filled: _____

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REMOTE COORDINATOR

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PRACTICAL & SENSITIVE ADVICE

Before offering help, take a moment to check in with yourself. You can't support others effectively if you're not grounded. Think about the advice we hear on every flight: "Put your own oxygen mask on before helping others." You need to be in a stable place yourself in order to truly be there for them and avoid actions that may unintentionally add stress. Depending on how you are coping with the situation will also help to guide you on how to best support the family.

Consider the following sentiments in your posture and subsequent interactions with the family:



Respect the family's routines

Avoid intruding or making assumptions about their needs or availability. Similarly, respect their pace. Keep showing up gently without pressure or expectation.



Maintain confidentiality

Do not share personal details unless the family has explicitly asked you to do so.



Always get consent

Before taking action, make sure you have consent, especially if it involves entering the home or sharing personal information, such as in a fundraiser, a care calendar or on social media.



Be emotionally prepared

If you're not in a place to provide comfort, consider indirect ways to help. The family needs support, not additional emotional weight.



★ **Be a team player**

Remember that when families designate a trusted friend or relative to manage offers of help and share updates about their child, the purpose is that the “point person” helps reduce the emotional strain on parents who may otherwise have to repeat difficult news again and again. Be thoughtful not to circumvent their efforts. Recognize that communicating directly to the team leader is actually serving the family well.

★ **Give without expectation**

In times of crisis, expressions of gratitude may be delayed or forgotten, but your support is still deeply valued. Giving extra heapings of grace is more than likely what most families will need.

★ **Actively listen**

There’s no need to try to fix or relate. Give your undivided attention, validate feelings, ask open ended questions, leave advice at the door unless asked and be comfortable in silence. Sometimes the most powerful support is simply being present.

★ **Assess your resources**

Think about your skills, time you can commit as well as those you know in the community who can join you in on your efforts. Be careful not also to overextend yourself but rather find realistic tasks that can be seen through to completion.

★ **Stay flexible**

When parenting children with medical complexity, life can change in an instant. Plans are hard to make when the next day, or even the next hour, is uncertain. In this kind of unpredictable environment, flexibility and understanding are essential.