

Bill of Rights

For Cancer Patients and Family Members



Bill of Rights for Cancer Patients

I have the right to be told the truth about my disease.

I have the right to feel bad if I receive bad news.

I have the right to talk to my doctor and my family about my cancer. And I have the right to privacy in refusing to talk with others about it if that is my choice.

I have the right to be treated as a person and not merely as a “patient” while I am sick. The fact that I am sick does not give others the right to make decisions for me.

I have the right to think about other things besides my cancer. I do not have to allow cancer to control every detail of my life.

I have the right to ask others for help in the things I cannot do for myself, within reason.

I always have the right to hope—for a full cure, a longer life, or a happier life here and now.

I have the right and it is okay to be angry with people I love. My anger does not mean I have stopped loving them.

I have the right to cope with my cancer in my own way, and my family members have the right to cope with it in their own. Our ways may be different, but that is okay.

I have the right to be free of pain if that is my choice.

Bill of Rights for Family Members

I have the right to enjoy my own good health without feeling guilty. It is not my fault that someone I love has cancer.

I have the right to choose whom I will talk to about the cancer. If I hurt others’ feelings because they are asking too many questions, it is not my fault.

I have the right to know what is going on in our family, even if I am a child. I have the right to be told the truth about the cancer in words I can understand.

I have the right to disagree with the patient even if he or she has cancer. I can feel angry with someone and not feel guilty because sickness does not stop someone from being a real person.

I have the right to feel what I feel now, not what someone else says I “should” feel.

I have the right to look after my own needs, even if they do not seem as great as the patient’s. I am permitted to take “time out” from cancer without feeling disloyal.

I have the right to get outside help for the patient if I cannot manage all the responsibilities of home care myself.

I have the right to get help for myself, even if others in my family choose not to get help.



About Cancer Family Care

Since 1971, Cancer Family Care (CFC) has provided counseling, education, and emotional support to people affected by cancer.

CFC offers four programs: The Center for Individual and Family Counseling, Treehouse Children's Services, The Coping Connection – Education and Outreach, and Tresses Wig Program.

Cancer Family Care seeks to help children and adults cope with the effects of a cancer-related illness or loss. CFC is known throughout Southwestern Ohio and Northern Kentucky as a force of compassion and strength in the face of cancer and bereavement.