



5 WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT AN EMPLOYEE WITH BREAST CANCER

When a co-worker receives a breast cancer diagnosis, it's often hard to know how to respond. Unless you or a loved one has gone through cancer treatment or a similarly devastating disease, it's understandable that you may be at a loss for words and wonder what you should do, if anything.

Fortunately, there are a few simple ways you can support an employee with breast cancer. Here's our list:

1. RESPECT THE EMPLOYEE'S PRIVACY.

Remember, receiving a breast cancer diagnosis is extremely scary, and sharing it with anyone, let alone one's employer, often makes a person feel very vulnerable. Respect your employee to come to you when she's ready. And when she does, listen to her, be willing to work around her schedule and treatment needs, and do not share any personal information with her co-workers until she decides to share her diagnosis publicly.

2. ACCOMMODATE YOUR EMPLOYEE.

While breast cancer treatments vary from patient to patient, they can often be invasive, leaving the patient fatigued, dizzy, nauseous, and often worried. It's important to accommodate your employee as best you can; this might be as simple as moving the printer closer to her desk, so she doesn't have to walk so far. Or, it might involve something more complex, like coming up with a work-from-home plan. Alternatively, it might mean simply checking in with her on a semi-regular basis to make sure she doesn't feel overwhelmed or stressed during the workday.

3. GET HR INVOLVED.

Your company's human resource team can be your biggest asset during your employee's breast cancer treatment. HR employees are specially trained to deal with situations where an employee needs extra support — like when undergoing cancer treatment. By getting your HR

team involved, you're not only making sure your employee is treated well at work, but you're also making sure all of her health insurance is in line and showing her that the company overall cares about her health.

4. REALIZE THIS IS A LONG-TERM SITUATION.

Even the simplest breast cancer treatment plans take several months to complete. It's best to recognize early on that this is a long-term situation that may last months or years. Because of this situation, it may mean making overall adjustments in your company to shift workloads or simply being aware that your employee may need a little extra encouragement.

5. EXPRESS EMPATHY.

At the end of the day, the best thing you can do for your employee is to express empathy. Remember, she is going through what is probably one of the scariest moments of her life. Recognize this. Perhaps even tell her this. Listen to her when she talks to you about her diagnosis. Express your sympathy and willingness to help her in any way. Showing her that you there for her, above all else, is an excellent way to support an employee with breast cancer.

HELP US HELP BREAST CANCER PATIENTS.

Have you or someone you know been diagnosed with breast cancer? At the AiRS Foundation, we raise awareness about the disease as well as help women who've had mastectomies, due to breast cancer, receive the reconstructive surgery they need to feel whole again. Want to make a difference in the life of a breast cancer patient? Consider making a [donation](#) to the AiRS Foundation! Our work depends on donations from individuals like you.

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