

THE FLOOZIE



FOUNDATION

ROADMAP

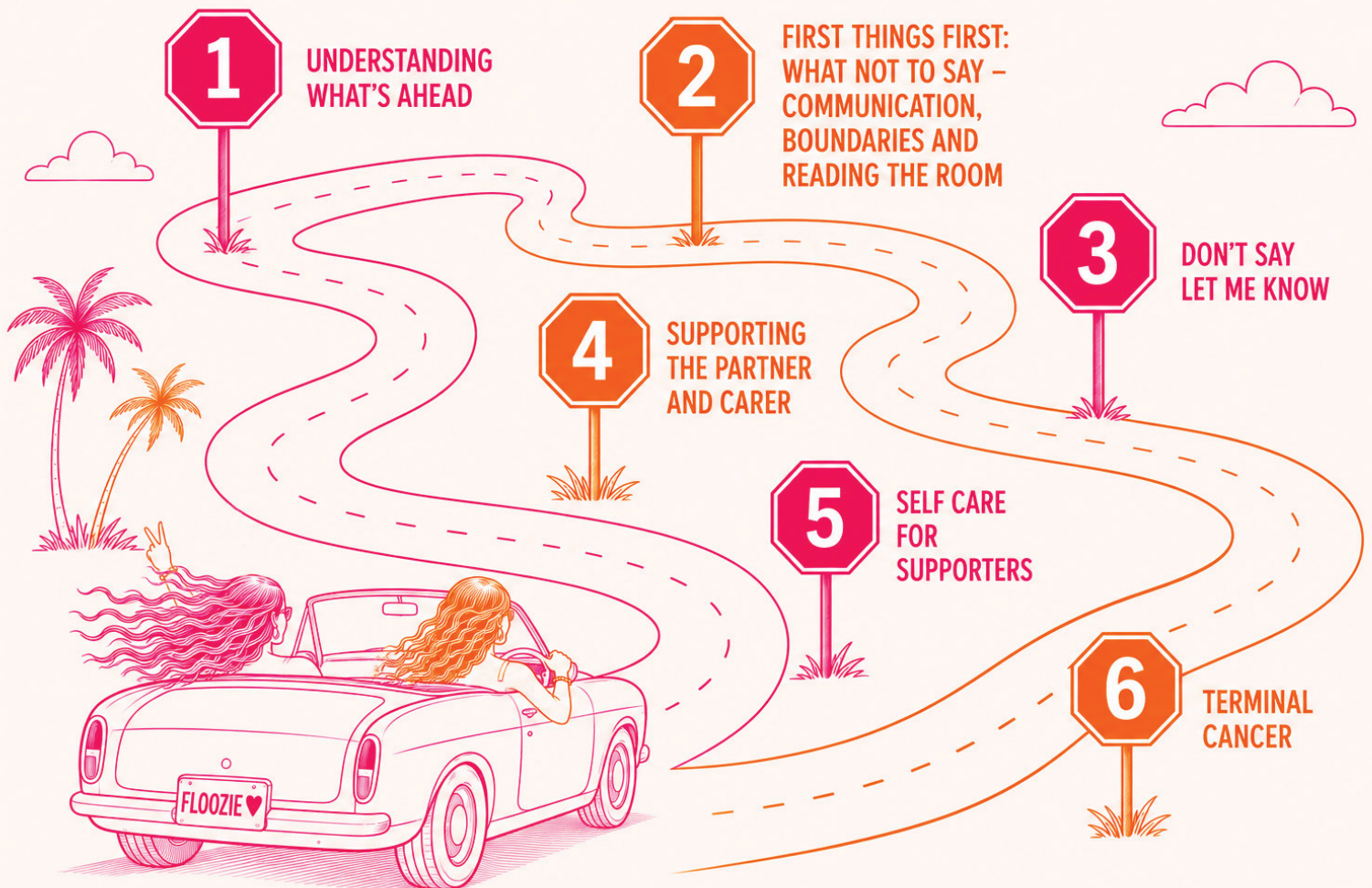
for Supporting Someone with Cancer



flooziefoundation.org.au



BECAUSE
"LET ME KNOW IF YOU NEED ANYTHING"
IS LOVELY...
BUT FLOOZIES GET AROUND PEOPLE.



When someone you love is diagnosed with cancer, most people genuinely want to help, they just don't know how.

Cancer is overwhelming for everyone involved. Friends worry about saying the wrong thing. Family members panic. Group chats go quiet. People disappear because they feel awkward or helpless.

BUT HERE'S THE THING:

You do not need to be perfect.

You just need to stay.

At The Floozie Foundation, we believe support looks less like grand speeches and more like:

- dropping soup at the door
- remembering scan dates
- sending dumb memes during chemo
- watering plants
- driving someone to treatment
- continuing to invite them to things
- sitting in silence
- and showing up over and over again

We call it **"getting around your people"**

And while every cancer experience is different,
here's a Floozie-style roadmap for supporting someone through it.





UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS AHEAD

One of the hardest things about supporting someone with cancer is not knowing what to expect.

People often imagine cancer as:

DIAGNOSIS —> TREATMENT —> RECOVERY.

But for many people, it's much messier than that.

Understanding the road ahead can help supporters show up with more patience, compassion and realistic expectations.

UNDERSTANDING THE CANCER ROLLERCOASTER

Cancer is not one moment. It's a thousand moments.

Diagnosis. Scans. Waiting. Treatment. Side effects. Recovery. More scans. Fear. Hope. Fatigue. Grief. Relief. Anxiety. Repeat.

Someone may:

- look "fine" but feel terrible
- cancel plans last minute
- disappear socially
- become anxious before scans
- be energetic one week and wiped out the next
- struggle emotionally long after treatment ends

This is normal.

Try not to take withdrawal or inconsistency personally. Cancer often forces people into survival mode.

THERE WILL BE A LOT OF WAITING

Waiting for:

- scans
- biopsies
- appointments
- blood results
- treatment approvals
- surgery dates
- scan results

And the waiting is often one of the hardest parts.

You may notice your person becomes more anxious, withdrawn, emotional or irritable around these times. This is incredibly normal.

Support can look like:

- remembering important dates
- checking in before scans
- distracting them when needed
- sitting in uncertainty without trying to “fix” it

Sometimes the kindest thing you can say is:

“This is really hard. I’m here with you in it.”

TREATMENT CAN CHANGE QUICKLY

Plans may suddenly change because of:

- side effects
- infections
- scan results
- low immunity
- fatigue
- medication reactions
- hospital admissions

Someone may seem “fine” one week and really struggle the next.

Try to stay flexible and avoid:

- **“But you looked so well yesterday!”**
- **“I thought chemo was finished?”**
- **“Are you still sick?”**

Cancer treatment is rarely linear.



PEOPLE OFTEN **DISAPPEAR** AFTER THE INITIAL SHOCK

At diagnosis, support pours in:

- Flowers and gifts arrive
- Phones ring.
- Meals arrive.
- Messages flood social media.

Then gradually... life moves on for everyone else.

But cancer often doesn't.

Months later, the person may still be:

- in treatment
- financially stressed
- exhausted
- grieving changes to their body or identity
- anxious
- attending constant appointments

One of the most valuable things you can do is long after the crisis phase fades.

KEEP SHOWING UP

The long-haul Floozies are the gold standard.

CANCER IMPACTS MORE THAN THE BODY

Cancer affects:

- confidence
- intimacy
- relationships
- finances
- work
- identity
- parenting
- mental health

Even "good scans" don't always erase fear.

Someone may grieve:

- their old body
- independence
- energy levels
- certainty about the future
- fertility

This emotional side is often invisible to outsiders.

THERE MAY STILL BE JOY

This part matters.

Cancer is hard. But life does not completely stop.

There can still be:

- laughter
- holidays
- coffee dates
- concerts
- beach walks
- terrible jokes
- family dinners
- dancing in kitchens
- ridiculous group chats

Sometimes supporters become so afraid of saying the wrong thing that they treat someone like they're fragile glass.

Please don't.

People with cancer still want normality, silliness, connection and fun.

Floozies firmly believe in making room for joy wherever possible.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET IT PERFECT

You will say the wrong thing sometimes.

You will feel helpless sometimes.

You may not know what to do.

That's okay.

The people who matter most are rarely the ones with perfect words.

They're the ones who:

- stay
- listen
- remember
- adapt
- help practically
- tolerate discomfort
- and keep getting around their people

That's what support really looks like.



FIRST THINGS FIRST: WHAT NOT TO SAY - COMMUNICATION, BOUNDARIES & READING THE ROOM

UNDERSTANDING THE CANCER ROLLERCOASTER

One of the biggest misconceptions about supporting someone with cancer is thinking everyone wants the same kind of support.

Some people want to talk constantly.

Some barely want to discuss cancer at all.

Some want visitors.

Some want silence.

Some love practical help but hate advice.

Some need humour to survive.

Others need softness and space.

There is no "correct" way to cope with cancer.

The best supporters learn how to read the room, and adapt.

ASK WHAT FEELS HELPFUL

Instead of assuming, try asking:

- "Do you feel like talking about it or being distracted?"
- "Are texts easier than calls?"
- "Would you like visitors or quiet time?"
- "Do you want updates shared or kept private?"
- "What kind of support feels best right now?"

Preferences often change throughout treatment too.

Someone may want company during chemo but isolation afterwards.

They may love messages but not have energy to reply.

They may want humour one day and honesty the next.

Flexibility is everything.

DON'T TAKE BOUNDARIES PERSONALLY

Cancer forces people to protect their energy fiercely.

That can sometimes look like::

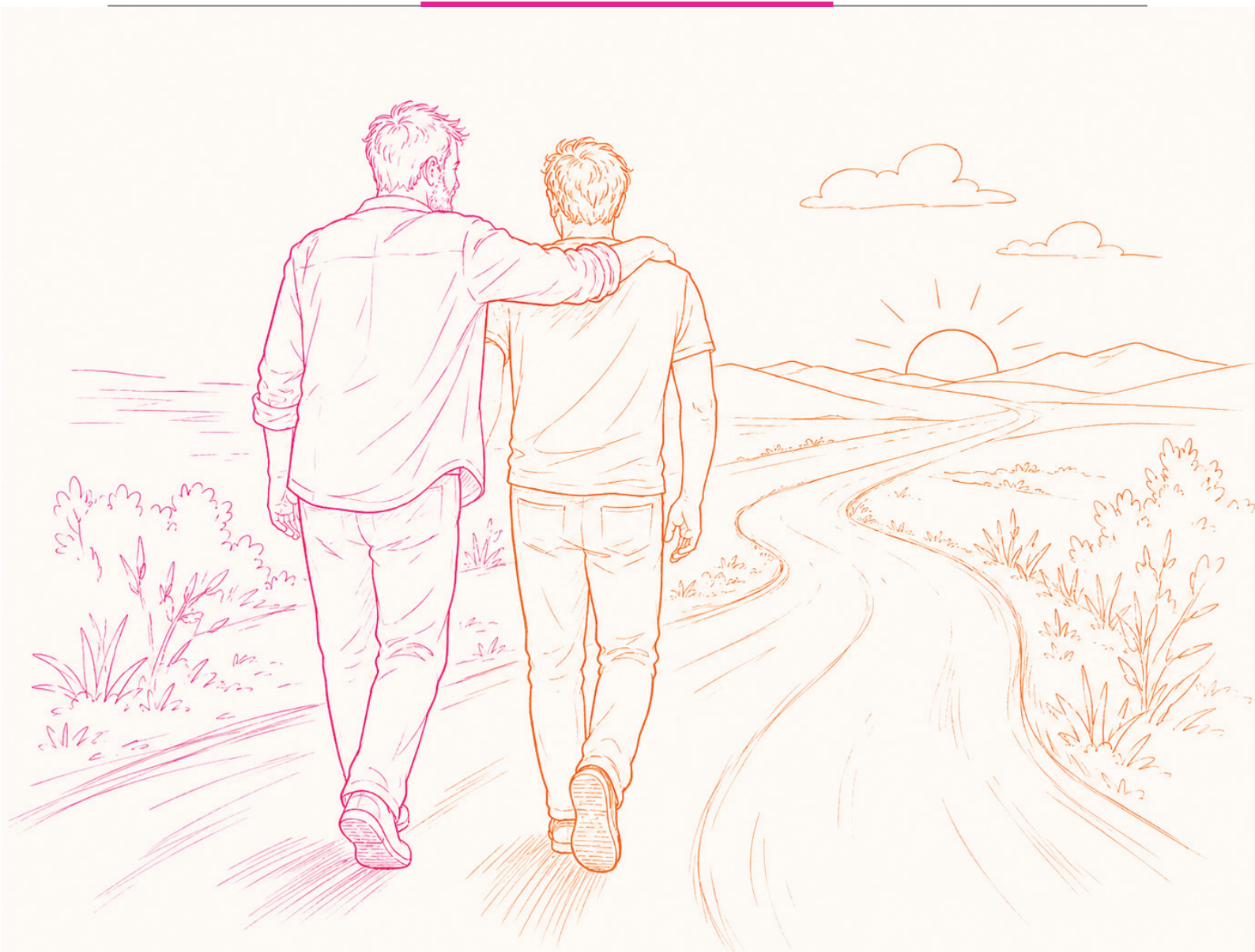
- unanswered messages
- cancelled plans
- needing space
- avoiding phone calls
- limiting visitors
- stepping back socially

This is usually about survival, not rejection.

Treatment can leave people physically exhausted, emotionally overloaded and unable to manage everyone else's feelings and expectations.

A VERY FLOOZIE PRINCIPLE:

Support should reduce pressure, not create it.



UNDERSTAND “NO RESPONSE” DOESN’T MEAN “NO LOVE”

People with cancer often receive:

- endless messages
- medical information
- appointment reminders
- advice
- admin
- family communication
- emotional processing from others

Replying to everyone can become impossible.

Sometimes the most supportive messages are the ones with:

- no pressure
- no questions
- no expectation of a reply

For example:

“Thinking of you today. No need to respond.”

“Meme delivery only.”

“Soup fairy has arrived.”

Low-pressure support is elite supporter behaviour.

RESPECT PRIVACY

Some people are very open about their diagnosis.

Others are deeply private.

Never assume you can:

- share updates
- tell mutual friends
- post online
- discuss scan results
- ask invasive medical questions

If unsure, ask:

“Are you comfortable with me sharing this?”

People deserve control over their own story.



Floozie Chat >

THINKING OF
YOU TODAY 

NO NEED TO
RESPOND.



MEME
DELIVERY ONLY.



SOUP FAIRY
HAS ARRIVED.



HUMOUR CAN BE INCREDIBLY HEALING

Many people use humour to cope:

- Dark humour.
- Ridiculous humour.
- Chemo humour.
- Bald jokes.
- Group-chat chaos.

If your person leads with humour, follow their lead.

Laughter can create relief, normality and connection in really hard moments.

At the Floozie Foundation, we strongly support:

- inappropriate memes
- hospital snack reviews
- dramatic wig content
- Bald jokes.
- Group-chat chaos.

Playfulness is not denial...Sometimes it's survival.

YOU DON'T NEED TO FILL THE SILENCE

Not every conversation needs:

- positivity
- advice
- solutions
- silver linings

Sometimes someone just needs:

- quiet company
- honesty
- a cup of tea
- a cry
- normal conversation about absolutely nothing

You are allowed to simply sit beside someone in hard moments.

That is support too.

EVERY PERSON'S "SUPPORT LANGUAGE" IS DIFFERENT

Some people feel loved through:

- practical help
- humour
- emotional conversations
- distraction
- food
- gifts
- company
- space

Pay attention to what genuinely comforts your person, not what you would want in the same situation.

The best support is personalised support.

THE GOAL ISN'T PERFECTION - IT'S SAFETY

The people we feel safest with during hard times are rarely the most polished.

They're the people who:

- respect boundaries
 - listen well
 - stay consistent
 - allow honesty
 - don't make things about themselves
 - and let us be fully human
-

That's the Floozie way...
Messy. Warm. Loyal. Playful. Present.



WHAT TO SAY



We know people mean well. Truly. But some comments can unintentionally feel dismissive, exhausting or isolating.



TRY TO AVOID

- “Everything happens for a reason.”
- “Stay positive.”
- “At least...”
- “You’re so strong.”
(especially when they’re falling apart)
- “I know someone who had that and died.”
- Unsolicited miracle cures from your cousin’s neighbour’s Facebook group



INSTEAD TRY:

- “This really sucks.”
- “I’m here.”
- “You don’t have to reply.”
- “Thinking of you today.”
- “What would feel helpful right now?”
- “I can sit with you in the hard bits too.”



*You don't need silver linings.
Presence beats perfection every time.*





THE FLOOZIE RULE: DON'T SAY "LET ME KNOW"

People with cancer are often too exhausted to coordinate help.

INSTEAD OF:

"Let me know if you need anything."

TRY:

- "I'm dropping dinner Tuesday."
- "I'm free for school pickup Thursday."
- "Coffee delivery incoming."
- "Can I take your bins out?"
- "I'm nearby, want company or quiet?"
- "I've got your pharmacy run sorted."

Specific help removes pressure.

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

FOOD (WITHOUT MAKING IT WEIRD)

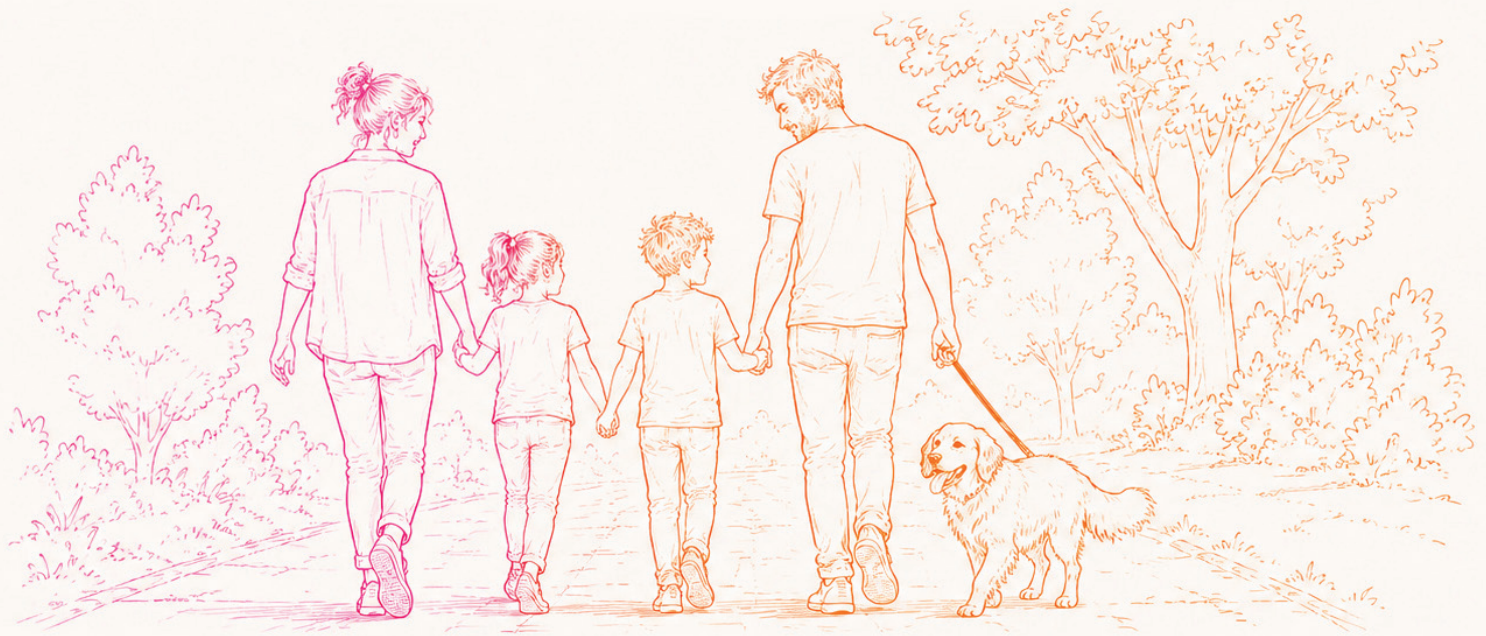
Treatment can affect appetite massively.

HELPFUL:

- freezer meals
- simple snacks
- Uber Eats vouchers
- cut fruit
- electrolyte drinks
- checking dietary restrictions first

NOT HELPFUL:

- forcing wellness culture
- commenting on weight
- saying "you should try celery juice"



KIDS & FAMILY LOGISTICS

One of the hardest parts of cancer is trying to keep normal life functioning.

Huge help can look like:

- school pickups
- sports runs
- homework help
- sleepovers for kids
- dog walking
- activity lifts
- grocery runs

Practical support reduces mental load enormously.

SCAN DAY SUPPORT

“Scanxiety” is real.

The days before scans and results can be some of the hardest emotionally.

Ways to help:

- send a message that morning
- offer distraction
- accompany them to appointments
- remember result dates
- don’t disappear because you feel nervous too

Even a simple: **“Thinking of you today. No need to reply.”** can feel deeply supportive.

CONTINUE INCLUDING THEM

One of the saddest parts of cancer can be social isolation.

Keep inviting them.

Even if they say no.

Even if they cancel.

Even if they're bald, tired, anxious or different than before.

People still want connection.

Just make space for flexibility.

UNDERSTAND FATIGUE IS NOT "JUST TIRED"

Cancer fatigue is next-level exhaustion. It is not fixed by one good sleep.

Some people:

- can socialise for one hour then need two days recovery
- struggle walking up stairs
- need naps after showering
- appear okay but crash later

Respect energy limitations without making someone feel guilty.



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HOW TO SUPPORT A PARTNER OR CARER

Partners and carers often carry an enormous invisible load:

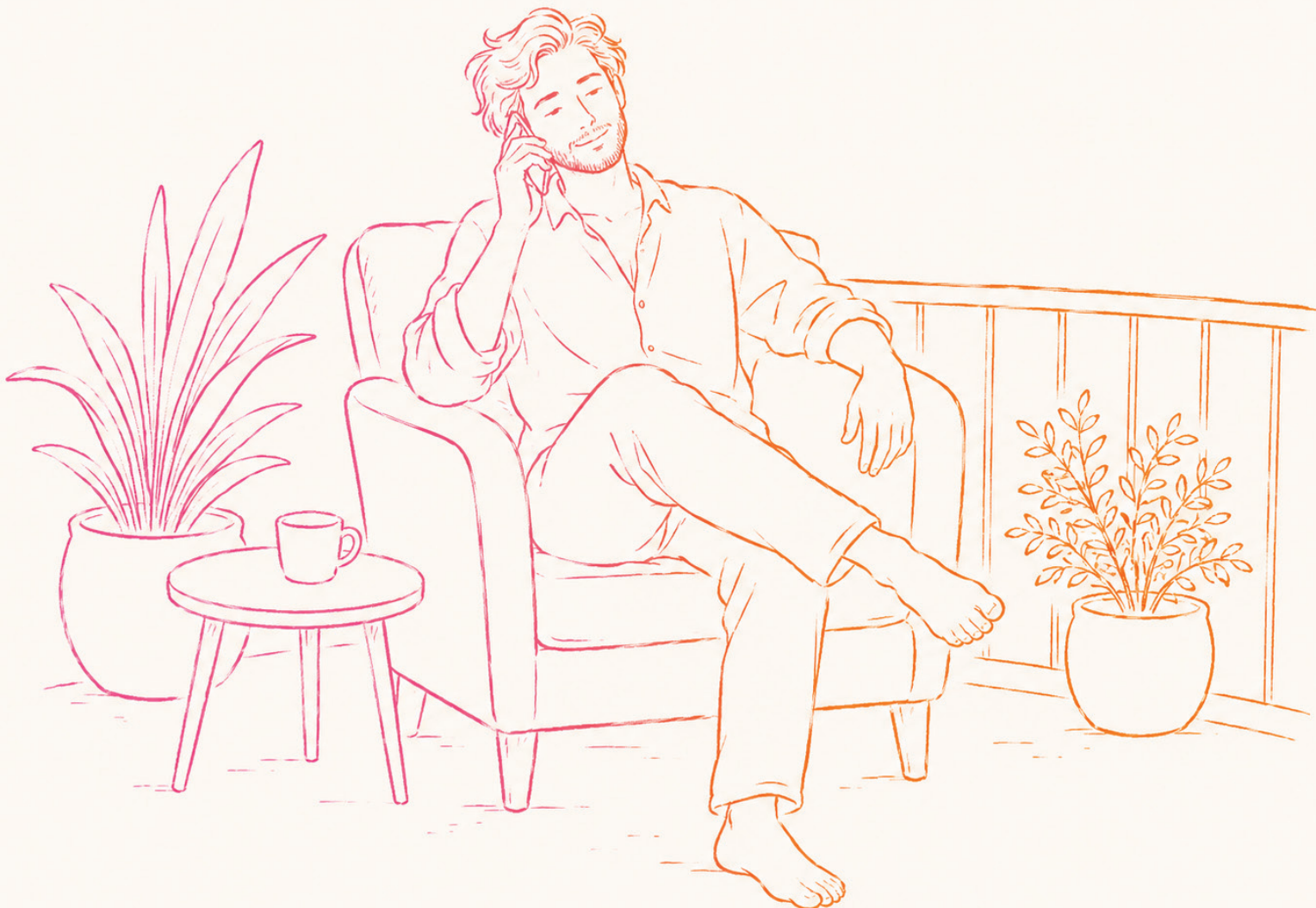
- appointments
- medication management
- finances
- parenting
- emotional support
- household logistics
- fear

CHECK IN WITH THEM TOO.

Not with: "How's she/he doing?"

But with: "How are YOU coping?"

Carers need support as well.





SELF-CARE FOR SUPPORTERS

BECAUSE YOU CAN'T POUR FROM AN EMPTY FLOOZIE CUP

Supporting someone through cancer can be beautiful, meaningful and deeply connecting. It can also be exhausting.

Many supporters quietly carry:

- fear
- guilt
- anxiety
- emotional overload
- burnout
- helplessness
- anticipatory grief
- mental fatigue

And because the focus is (rightfully) on the person with cancer, supporters often feel they need to “hold it together” all the time.

**But here's the Floozie truth:
You are allowed to struggle too.**



Looking after yourself does not make you selfish.

**It helps you stay steady, present
and sustainable for the long haul.**

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE EVERYTHING

One of the quickest roads to burnout is trying to become:

- the organiser
- the emotional support person
- the researcher
- the chauffeur
- the cleaner
- the meal provider
- the crisis manager
- and the "positive one"

all at once!

Cancer is a marathon.

Support works best as a community effort, not one exhausted human carrying everything alone.

**Let people help . Delegate . Rotate responsibilities
Create rosters . Accept offers
FLOOZIES ARE BIG BELIEVERS IN TEAM EFFORT.**

YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM IS EXPERIENCING THIS TOO

Living alongside cancer can put supporters in a near constant state of stress.

You may notice:

- trouble sleeping
- hypervigilance around phones
- scan-day anxiety
- irritability
- brain fog
- emotional numbness
- crying unexpectedly
- difficulty relaxing
- guilt when enjoying yourself

This is incredibly common.

Your body often stays in "**brace position**" waiting for the next result, complication or emergency.

Which means self-care is not indulgent. It's nervous system maintenance.

YOU ARE ALLOWED TO EXPERIENCE JOY



This one matters.

Many supporters feel guilty:

- going out
- laughing
- taking breaks
- exercising
- seeing friends
- enjoying normal life

But you do not need to suffer constantly in order to prove your love.
Moments of joy, rest and normality help refill emotional reserves.

You are allowed to:

- go to dinner
- watch trash TV
- take a weekend away
- exercise
- laugh at ridiculous memes
- sit in the sun with a coffee
- have conversations unrelated to cancer

Being constantly depleted helps nobody.

FIND YOUR OWN SUPPORT - Supporters need support too.

You need spaces where:
you don't have to be "the strong one"
you can say the scary thoughts out loud
you can cry honestly
you can vent without guilt

This might look like:

- therapy
- support groups
- trusted friends
- family
- online communities
- walks with someone safe
- journalling
- breathwork
- movement
- spiritual support

YOU DESERVE CARE TOO.

SET BOUNDARIES BEFORE YOU HIT BURNOUT

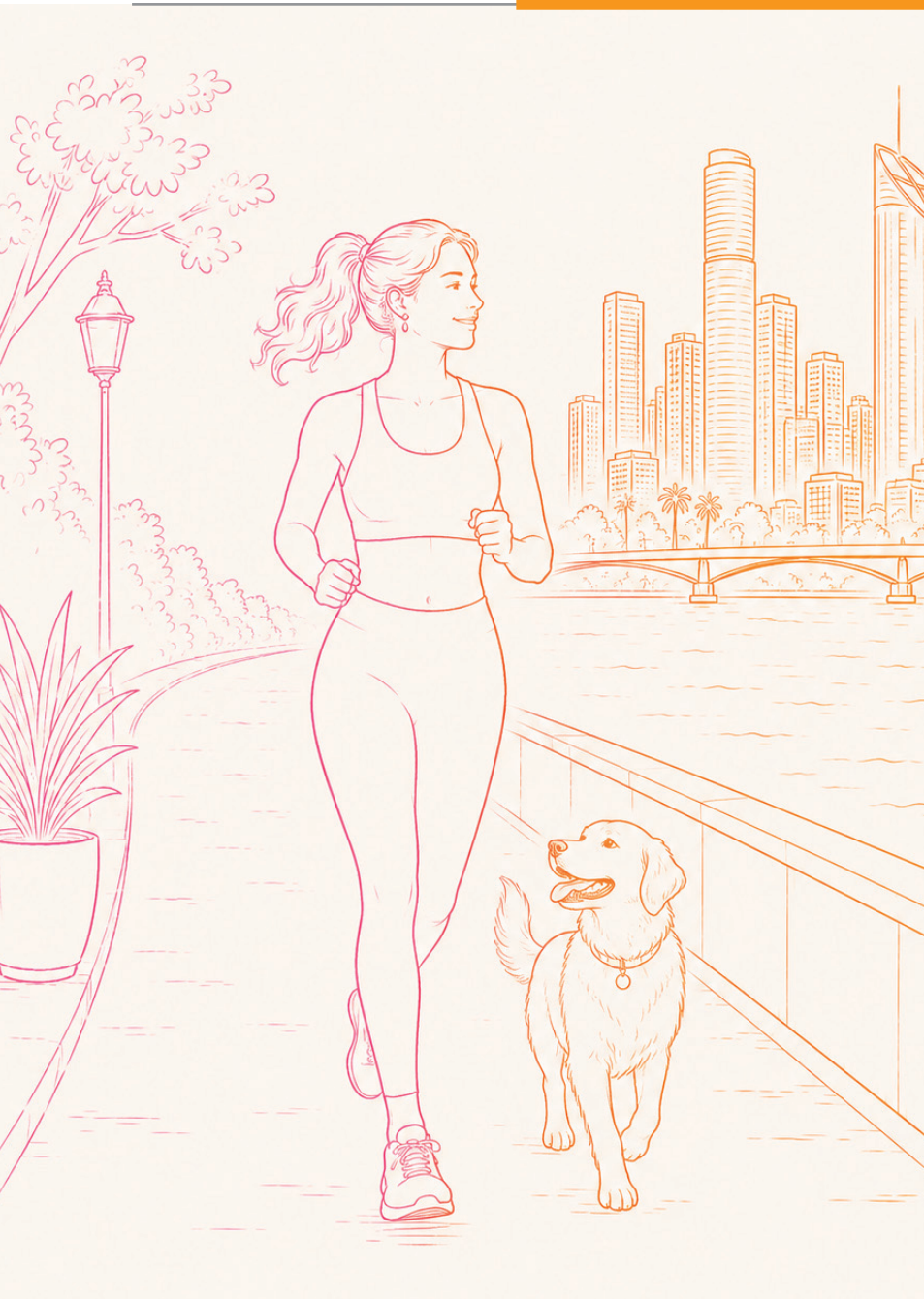
Burnout usually doesn't arrive dramatically - > It creeps in quietly.

Signs may include:

- resentment
- emotional numbness
- snapping at people
- exhaustion
- withdrawing socially
- feeling trapped
- losing patience
- feeling like you "can't do this anymore"

Boundaries are not abandoning someone.

They are what allow you to keep going sustainably.



Boundaries can sound like:

"I can help Tuesday but not every day."

"I need a quiet night tonight."

"I can drive you to treatment but I can't stay all day."

"I need some sleep before we talk."

DON'T FORGET YOUR BODY

Stress lives physically in the body.

Try to keep basic foundations in place where possible:

- sleep
- hydration
- movement
- nutrition
- fresh air
- time outside
- rest
- medical check-ups for yourself too

You matter as a human outside your caring role.

YOU DON'T NEED TO "STAY POSITIVE" ALL THE TIME

This is not a toxic positivity club.

Some days will feel hopeful.

Some days will feel terrifying.

Some days will feel deeply unfair.

You are allowed to feel all of it.

The goal is not constant positivity.

The goal is support, honesty and sustainability.



LET PEOPLE SUPPORT YOU BACK

Many supporters become very uncomfortable receiving help themselves.

But if someone offers:

- meals
- childcare
- coffee
- a listening ear
- errands
- respite

Try saying yes occasionally.

FLOOZIE RULE: COMMUNITY GOES BOTH WAYS.

REMEMBER: YOU ARE DOING BETTER THAN YOU THINK

There is no perfect way to support someone through cancer.

You will get tired.

You will say the wrong thing occasionally.

You will feel helpless sometimes.

What matters most is:

- consistency
- compassion
- honesty
- adaptability
- and continuing to show up

That is enough.

Actually, it's enormous.

AND DON'T FORGET:

Floozies support the supporters too.



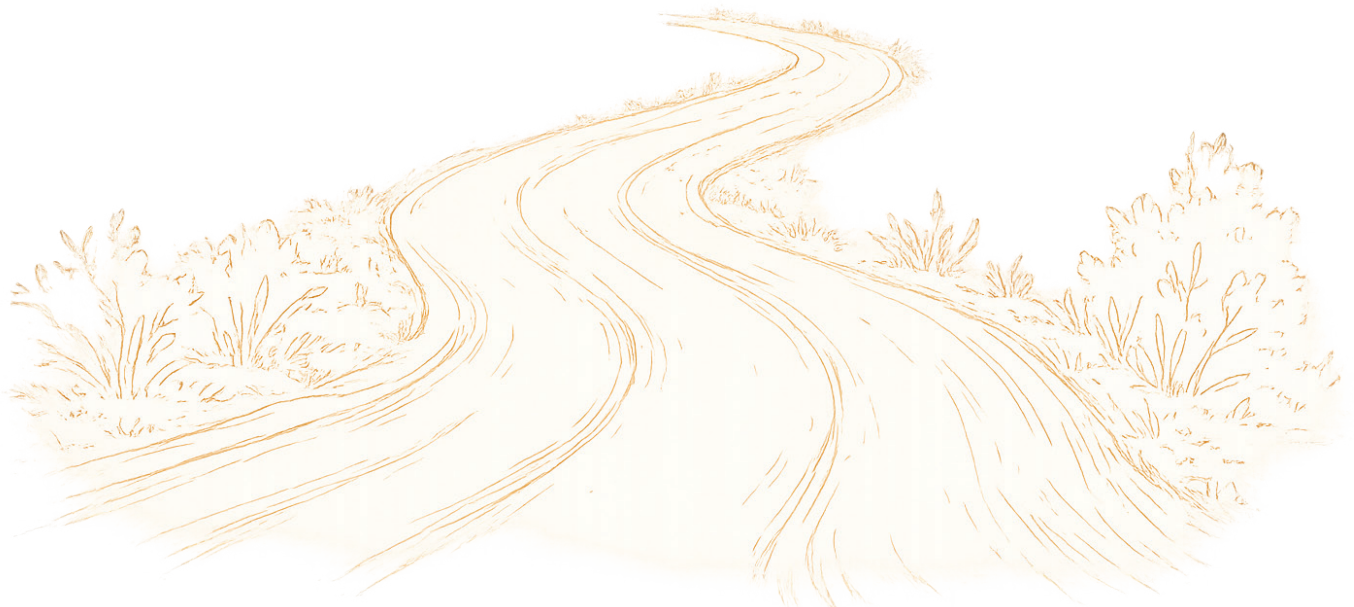
WHEN SOMEONE HAS TERMINAL, ADVANCED OR STAGE 4 CANCER

Many people live meaningful, joyful, connected lives for years while undergoing treatment.

The best support is often:

- treating them like a whole person
- making memories
- allowing honesty
- talking about future plans
- not making every conversation about cancer

**WHEN CANCER DOESN'T HAVE A SIMPLE ENDPOINT
PLEASE DON'T ASSUME THIS MEANS
SOMEONE IS "GIVING UP."**



THERE CAN STILL BE ENORMOUS JOY ALONGSIDE ENORMOUS DIFFICULTY.

Both things can exist together.

WHAT TO AVOID

Avoid asking people with stage 4 cancer, "When does chemo finish?" For many patients, chemotherapy is not a short-term treatment with a clear end date, it is their lifeline. In stage 4 cancer, chemo is often used to slow the progression of the disease, manage symptoms, and prolong life for as long as possible. When treatment stops, it can sometimes mean there are no further effective options available and care becomes primarily palliative. While questions about treatment may come from a place of curiosity or concern, they can unintentionally remind patients of the seriousness and limitations of their condition. A more compassionate approach is to ask how they are feeling or how they are coping, rather than focusing on when treatment will end.

WHAT SUPPORTERS SHOULD UNDERSTAND

People with stage 4 cancer may choose to stop treatment for many deeply personal reasons. After months or years of chemotherapy, radiation, surgeries, or other therapies, the physical and emotional toll can become overwhelming. Some patients reach a point where the side effects, exhaustion, pain, nausea, weakness, or loss of independence, outweigh the potential benefits of continuing treatment. Others may be told that the cancer is no longer responding or that further treatment is unlikely to significantly extend life. In these situations, many people choose to focus on quality of life rather than ongoing medical interventions. They may want to spend meaningful time with loved ones, remain comfortable, and have more control over how they live their remaining time. Stopping treatment is not a sign of weakness or failure; it is often a thoughtful and courageous decision made after careful consideration of what matters most to the individual.



Accepting a patient's decision to stop treatment can be difficult for family and friends, but it is important to remember that the choice belongs to the patient. People living with serious or terminal illnesses often weigh the physical side effects, emotional toll, quality of life, and the likelihood of benefit when making these decisions. Choosing to stop treatment does not mean they are "giving up", it can mean they are prioritising comfort, dignity, time with loved ones, and the ability to live the remainder of their life on their own terms. Supporting a patient means respecting their autonomy, listening without judgment, and understanding that only they truly know what they can continue to endure physically and emotionally.

AUTONOMY

In Australia, voluntary assisted dying (VAD) is now legal in most states under strict laws designed for people with advanced, incurable illnesses who are experiencing suffering they find intolerable. For many people living with cancer, simply knowing VAD is available can provide a sense of comfort, control, and dignity at a time when so much else feels uncertain. Supporters of someone considering VAD often discover that the decision is rarely about "giving up", it is usually about autonomy, relief from suffering, fear of losing independence, or wanting a peaceful and planned end surrounded by loved ones. Even when family members or friends do not personally agree with VAD, it is still possible to support the person with compassion, respect, and humanity.

DIGNITY

Supporting someone through this process does not mean you must change your own beliefs. It can instead mean listening without judgement, allowing them to speak openly about their fears and wishes, helping them access accurate medical information, attending appointments if invited, or simply remaining emotionally present. Many people facing terminal illness are frightened of becoming isolated or feeling like a burden, and one of the greatest gifts a supporter can offer is reassurance that they are still loved, valued, and not alone, regardless of the decisions they make about their care. It is also important for supporters to seek their own support, because these conversations can bring grief, conflict, anxiety, or moral distress.

COMPASSION

In practice, respectful support often looks like focusing on the person rather than the decision itself. You might say, "I may not fully feel the same way, but I love you and want to understand what matters most to you." That approach keeps dignity, connection, and trust at the centre of the relationship. Palliative care and VAD are also not opposites; many people continue receiving palliative care while exploring VAD. Ultimately, supporting someone through serious illness means honouring their experience, preserving compassion, and helping them feel seen and heard during one of the most vulnerable times of their life.



**"I MAY NOT FULLY FEEL THE
SAME WAY, BUT I LOVE YOU
AND WANT TO UNDERSTAND
WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU."**





THE BIGGEST THING? STAY.

Support tends to flood in at diagnosis... then quietly disappear.
But cancer is usually a marathon, not a moment.

The people who matter most are often the ones who:

- keep checking in months later
- remember anniversaries and scan dates
- continue showing up
- tolerate discomfort
- don't vanish when things become complicated

At Floozies, we believe community matters.

Humour matters.

Playfulness matters.

Tiny acts of kindness matter.

**You do not need to rescue someone.
You do not need the perfect words.
Just keep getting around your people.**

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