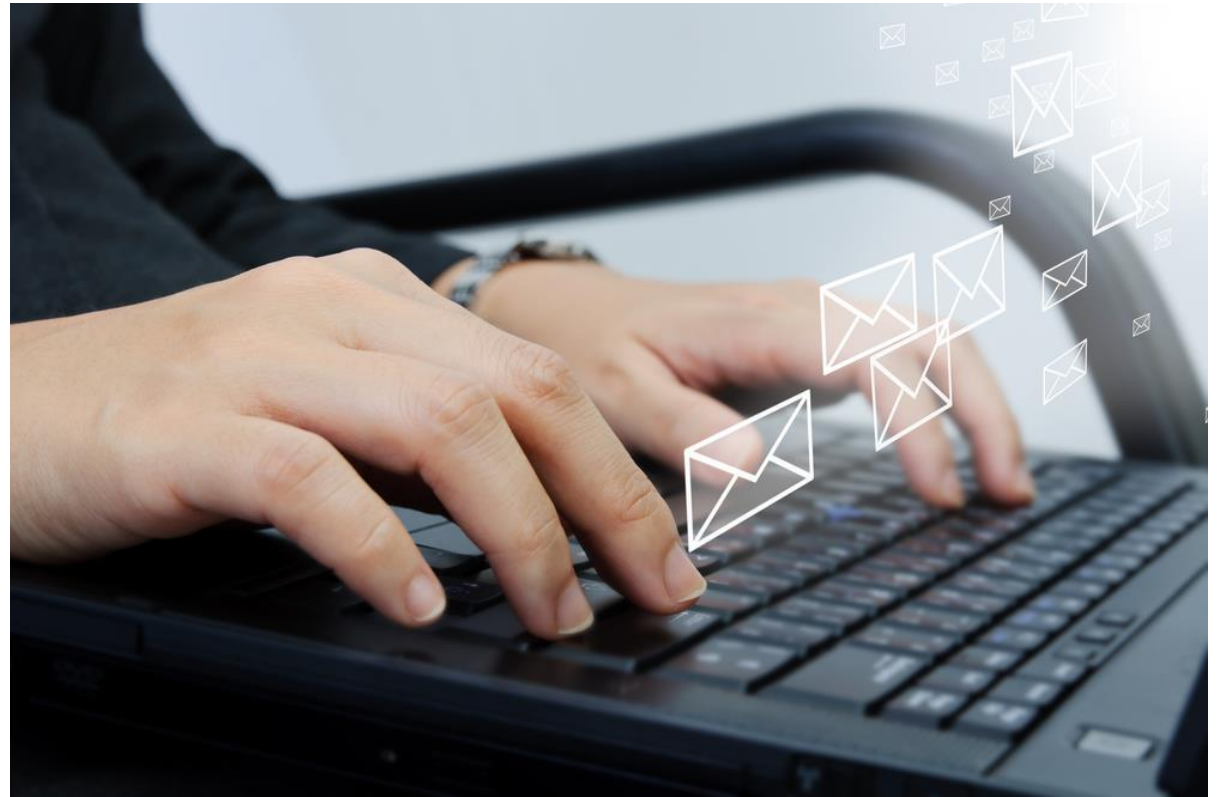
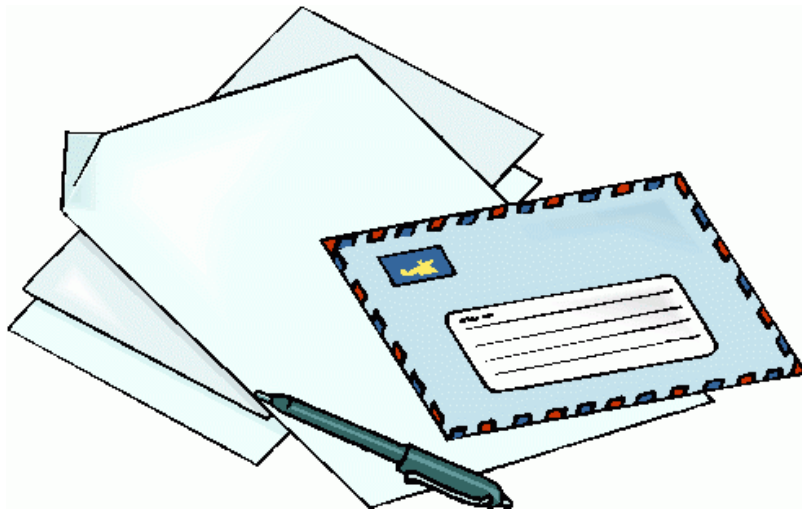


Writing to a Friend with Cancer



Letter/Email/Text Message

- Be the one to reach out
- It doesn't have to be a formal letter or email
- The most important thing is communication
- Make the person feel like you still intend to be involved in their life
- “Wishing you comfort and peace”



Tone

Do's

Keep it light-hearted

Share life lessons and other meaningful experiences

Talk about happy memories

Talk about exciting experiences to look forward to



Dont's

Don't talk about how bad you feel for them

Don't be so serious

Don't ask too many questions about their diagnosis

Don't relate their condition to someone else's

Don't offer medical advice



Avoid Being Insensitive

Know What Not to Say and Why

"At least you look skinny."

"Everything will be OK."

"No one ever said life was fair."

"Did you smoke?"

"It's just hair"

"I know exactly how you feel"

"You'll be just fine"

"We don't get what we can't handle"

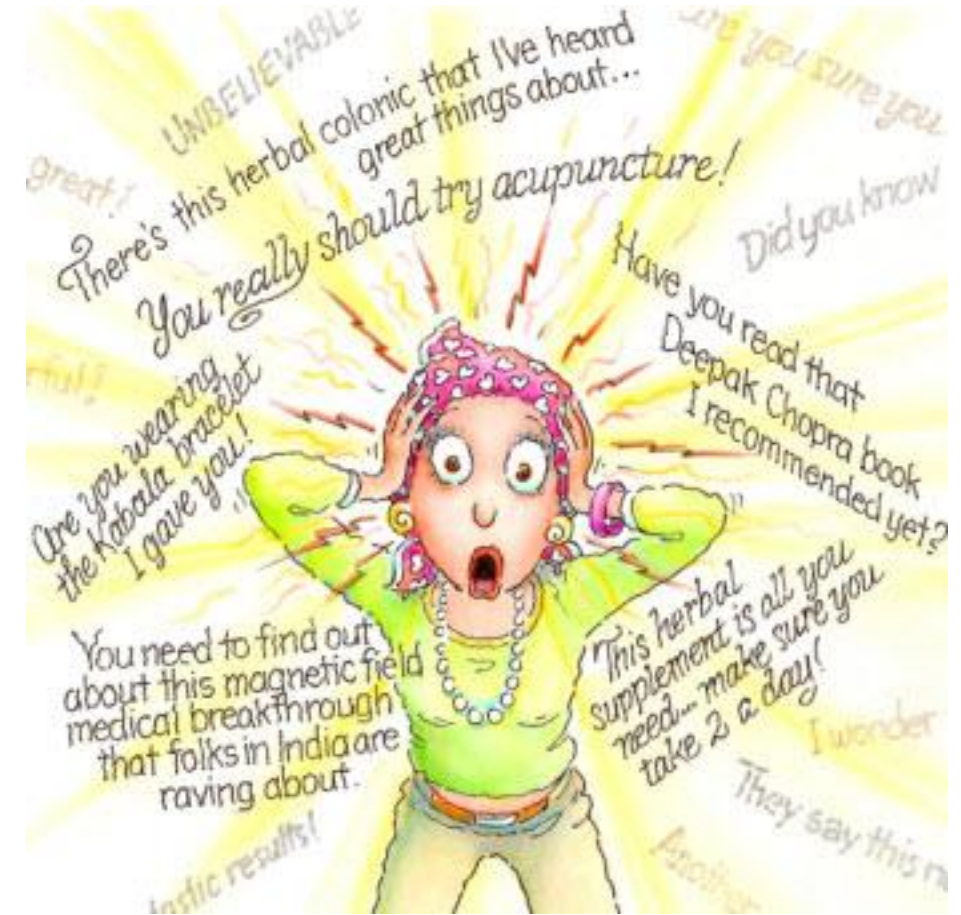
"You'll be a better person because of it!"

"Are you sure you want to try that treatment?"

"There are a lot of people worse off than you"

Don't Give Unsolicited Advice

- If there is a tip that you would like to communicate, do as much research as possible, and then concisely present it as a suggestion
- Don't tell them to read a book
- Maybe read the book first, summarize it for them, and then share what you think they can learn from it
- Do not ask why they're not doing something you suggested, this feels like it was an obligation.



Content

- Try not to include your own emotions about the person's condition
- Express more interest in the person than in their cancer treatment
- Share memories, good times, life lessons learned, meaningful experiences, etc.
- Make plans for the near-future and follow through



Think About Their Response

- Don't offer advice or suggest that they research something, they don't need extra work to do.
- Don't talk about being upset/sorry for them. Are they supposed to feel bad that they're causing you to feel upset?
- Try to make them smile about something
- Instead of trying to make light of the current situation, get them to think about something truly light.



If You're Going to Talk About Cancer

- Do your homework
- Educate yourself as much as possible about their diagnosis
- Look into side effects of the therapies
- Let them know you have some understanding of what the diagnosis is and what lies ahead



*If You're **NOT** Going to Talk About Cancer*

- Plan a fun get-together
- Ask about their life
- Encourage them to do things they enjoy
- Offer practical support



Most Importantly -----

Be a good listener

Offering to listen can make a huge difference to someone.

Regardless of the tone, end your letter with -
“Whenever you want to talk,
I am there for you.
I can be a really good listener.”