



MY SUPPORT PROTOCOL™

Who I want beside me, what kind of support
actually helps me, what does not and how
others can best walk with me.

I get to say what support looks like for me.

People may want to help me.

They may love me deeply and still not know what I need.

Some will know exactly how to sit beside me.

Some will want to fix things.

Some will ask too many questions.

Some will give advice I did not request.

Some will tell me stories I do not need to hear.

Some may become frightened and need reassurance from me.

And some will quietly show up in ways I will never forget.

I am grateful for the people who want to walk with me.

But support is most helpful when it supports me.

I give myself permission to communicate what I need, what I do not need, and who I want beside me.

I Will Identify My People

I do not need everyone to be everything for me.

Different people may support me in different ways.

There may be someone I want with me at medical appointments.

Someone who prays with me.

Someone who makes me laugh.

Someone who researches when I ask.

Someone who brings dinner.

Someone who drives.

Someone who listens without trying to fix anything.

Someone who can sit beside me without needing conversation.

Someone who reminds me that there is still an entire life beyond breast cancer.

I can build support around what people naturally do well.

I do not need one person to carry all of this with me.

I Will Tell People What Helps

People who love me may be relieved when I tell them what I actually need.

I can say:

"I need you to listen today. I am not looking for solutions."

"Would you come with me to this appointment and take notes?"

"Would you pray with me before treatment?"

"I do not want to talk about breast cancer today. Tell me something funny."

"Could you bring dinner Thursday?"

"Would you check on me tomorrow instead of asking me to keep everyone updated?"

"I need some quiet today."

Giving someone a specific way to help is not demanding.

It allows them to love me in a way I can actually receive.

I Will Protect Myself From Other People's Stories

The moment people learn about my diagnosis, they may remember every person they have ever known who had cancer.

They may tell me those stories.

Some may be encouraging.

Others may frighten me.

I do not have to receive them.

I can say:

"I know you are trying to help, but I am not listening to other people's cancer stories right now."

"I need to stay focused on my own experience."

"Please do not send me frightening articles, statistics or stories unless I ask for them."

Someone else's experience is not automatically information I need.

Their story belongs to them. My story belongs to me.

I Will Decide How Much I Want to Share

I do not owe everyone my medical information.

I can decide:

Who knows.

What they know.

When they know.

How much detail I share.

And who communicates updates when I do not want to.

I may want one trusted person to update family and friends.

I may use a private group, email or other communication method.

I may share very little.

I may share openly.

There is no single correct way.

My medical information does not become public property because people care about me.

I Will Not Become Responsible for Everyone Else's Fear

The people who love me may be frightened.

Their feelings matter.

But I cannot always be the person who carries their fear while I am carrying my own experience.

I do not have to repeatedly reassure everyone that I will be okay.

I do not have to answer every question immediately.

I do not have to make someone else comfortable with my decisions.

I do not have to manage everyone's emotional response to what is happening in my life.

When necessary, I can lovingly say:

"I know this is frightening for you, too. But right now, I need you to help hold me rather than asking me to hold your fear."

They may need support.

And I can encourage them to find it.

I Will Ask Before Accepting Advice

Support and advice are not the same thing.

People may send me diets.

Supplements.

Doctors.

Treatments.

Books.

Podcasts.

Videos.

Articles.

Testimonials.

Alternative approaches.

Stories about miraculous results.

Warnings about things they believe I should never do.

Some information may eventually be useful.

Some may not.

I can say:

"Thank you for thinking of me. Please ask before sending me medical or treatment information."

I will discuss medical questions, treatments, medications, supplements and potential interactions with qualified members of my healthcare team as appropriate.

I do not have to investigate every suggestion someone sends me.

I Will Choose the Kind of Prayer Support I Need

Prayer is important to me.

I can choose who I want praying with me and for me.

I may ask people to pray specifically for:

Wisdom.

Peace.

Discernment.

My medical team.

A procedure.

Treatment.

Recovery.

My family.

Rest.

Strength.

Healing.

I may want someone praying beside me before an appointment.

I may want prayer while I am receiving treatment.

I may want people praying from across the world without contacting me at all.

And sometimes I may simply need someone to sit quietly beside me in the presence of God.

I can tell my prayer community what would serve me best.

I Will Allow Practical Help

Sometimes the most healing support is very ordinary.

A meal.

A ride.

Laundry.

Groceries.

Walking the dog.

Picking up a prescription.

Sitting with a child.

Taking notes at an appointment.

Making a phone call.

Bringing coffee.

Watering the plants.

Sitting beside me during treatment.

Helping me organize information.

I may be accustomed to being the person who helps everyone else.

Receiving help may feel unfamiliar.

But allowing someone to carry one small thing does not make me helpless.

It gives me more room to carry what only I can carry.

I Will Protect Normal Life

Not every conversation needs to be about breast cancer.

I am still interested in other things.

I may want to hear about someone's vacation.

My grandchildren.

A ridiculous television show.

A new restaurant.

A garden.

A book.

A recipe.

Something happening in the world.

Something completely ordinary.

Please do not assume that because breast cancer entered my life, breast cancer is now the only thing in my life.

Sometimes one of the greatest gifts someone can give me is an hour when nobody mentions it.

I Will Give Myself Permission to Change What I Need

What helps me today may not help me next month.

At one point I may want company.

Later I may need solitude.

I may initially want to talk about everything.

Then I may become tired of talking about any of it.

I may want help during treatment that I no longer need during recovery.

I am allowed to change my mind.

I can say:

"What I need has changed."

The people who truly support me can learn alongside me.

What I Ask From the People Who Love Me

Please listen before trying to fix.

Ask what I need rather than assuming.

Please do not make me responsible for comforting you about what is happening to me.

Do not bring me frightening stories simply because they involve breast cancer.

Please ask before sending medical advice, treatment recommendations or research.

Respect my medical decisions even when you might choose differently.

Respect when I need privacy.

Respect when I need company.

Pray with me when I ask.

Laugh with me.

Talk to me about ordinary life.

Help me remember who I am beyond this diagnosis.

And when you do not know what to say, you do not need perfect words.

Sometimes:

"I love you. I am here."

is enough.

My Support Circle

I can think about support in circles.

The People Closest to Me

These are the people I trust with the most personal parts of my journey.

My Medical Support

The people I want involved in appointments, information and practical medical support:

My Prayer Support

The people or communities I want praying with and for me:

My Practical Support

The people I can call for meals, transportation, errands or other practical help:

My Everyday-Life People

The people who help me laugh, breathe and remember that my life is bigger than breast cancer:

My Personal Support Protocol

When I am overwhelmed, what helps me most is:

What does NOT help me:

What I want people to ask before doing:

What I would love someone to simply do without making me organize it:

Information I am comfortable sharing with others:

Information I prefer to keep private:

Who can communicate updates for me when I do not want to:

The kind of prayer support I want:

When I do not want to talk about breast cancer, I would love to:

My Commitment

I will allow myself to receive support without surrendering myself to it.

I can ask.

I can receive.

I can decline.

I can set boundaries.

I can change my mind.

I can tell people what I need.

And I can surround myself with people who help me remain connected to faith, hope, truth, laughter, love and the life that is still mine to live.

I do not need everyone beside me.

I need the right people beside me in the right ways.

Name: _____

Date: _____

My Support Protocol™ is a personal reflection, communication and self-advocacy tool. It does not replace medical, mental health, spiritual or other professional care when such support is needed.