



cancer league

My Work Colleague has Cancer

The Cancer League's Guide for Team Colleagues
Supporting the Return to the Everyday Work Life



Providing Support for the Return to Everyday Work Life

Each Type of Cancer is Unique

There isn't just *one type* of cancer. Each person reacts individually to the disease and deals with the situation in a very personal way.

What the Work Environment needs to know

Cancer leaves its mark. The physical and emotional constitutions have changed. Cancer survivors report fatigue and difficulty concentrating. They may not be as resilient as they were before for a while.

Team Colleagues Play a Key Role

Through careful and conscious accompaniment of the affected person, you shall have a decisive influence on the working environment and the reintegration process.

Your supervisor or manager, the team and the human resources department shall support you in this challenging time.

Diagnosis and Announcing the Disease

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« I am afraid about my colleagues' reactions when I announce my illness to my employer. I have a guilty conscience because I'm imposing more work on my colleagues. I want security and support, and need someone to listen to me. » *Name of the editor known

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Checklist for Team Colleagues (Phase 1)

- I acknowledge my own reactions and uncertainties at the time. If necessary, I consult with the human resources department.
- I endeavour to maintain an empathetic attitude. I offer my support and am willing to listen.
- I respect the affected person's communication needs. At the same time, I respect their privacy.

Treatment of the Disease

« During my absence, I am glad to be contacted and that you continue to invite me to events or meetings. If I continue working, I need understanding from others, but would still like to be treated like everyone else. »

*Name of the editor known

Checklist for Team Colleagues (Phase 2)

- If the affected person wishes, I ask about their health. I pay attention to what the person says and keep in contact in a low-keyed manner, depending on the relationship with the person and my own discretion. I coordinate with my team colleagues in order to prevent that the affected person may feel pressured in any way.
- I let the affected person know that they are recognized as a member of the team. For example, I invite the affected person to events outside of work.
- If the affected person continues to work, I pay special attention to maintaining a good balance between empathetic and everyday work attitude. I offer my support and listen to them. However, it is important that they are also treated like everyone else.

Reintegration into Employment

« During my reintegration, I would like to know that my colleagues have an understanding of my situation. In order to return to normal, I would like to be treated like everyone else. My colleagues' help is most welcome, especially in helping me to newly learn certain tasks. » *Name of the editor known

Checklist for Team Colleagues (Phase 3)

- I do not blame the affected person because of their low and/or reduced workload.
- I offer my support to the person in re-learning certain processes.
- I am aware that a return to work does not mean an end to the person's illness or treatment.
- I pay attention to keeping a real balance between being especially empathetic and everyday interaction. The colleague needs my support. At the same time, the affected person would like to be treated the same as all other members of the work team.



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We are here for help:

Your Cantonal or Regional Cancer League

www.krebsliga.ch/region

Free Cancer Hotline

Mon-Fri, 9-19h

0800 11 88 11

Contact

cancerandwork@swisscancer.ch

www.krebsliga.ch/krebsundarbeit

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