



HOW TO SUPPORT TEENS COPING DURING A HOSPITALIZATION

CHILD LIFE AT CITY OF HOPE

For Child Life support and education, please email your Child Life Specialist:



Jo Ann Namm,
M.S., CCLS
jnamm@coh.org



Marisol Trujillo,
M.S., CCLS
mtrujillo@coh.org



Megan Matthews,
M.S., CCLS
mematthews@coh.org



Marissa Verdin,
M.S., CCLS
mverdin@coh.org

Common Responses to Illness and Hospitalization

- Overdependence
- Helplessness
- Rebellion
- Anger
- Seeking independence
- May become defiant and noncompliant
- Regression
- Irritability

Possible Hospitalization Fears/Concerns

- Feelings of isolation and loss of control
- Loss of socialization and peer interaction
- Powerlessness
- Loss of privacy
- Worry about changes in appearance
- Fear of death

Tips for a Teen-friendly Environment

- Utilize privacy curtains.
- Knock before entering the room.
- Encourage staff to introduce themselves prior to entering and inform teen what they are there for.
- Encourage visitors to check in before visiting.
- Encourage teen to decorate their room (posters, pictures of family and friends, etc.).

Ways to Continue Supporting Your Teen's Healthy Development

- Encourage your teen to be involved with his or her care.
- Help your teen stay connected with friends and peers.

Ways You Can Support Your Teen

- Encourage family rituals and/or traditions to bring "home" into the hospital.
- Praise your teen when they are able to accomplish something challenging in the hospital.
- Encourage them to ask you and the medical team questions about their care.
- Encourage your teen to share or express their feelings in healthy ways, such as talking with friends.

Encourage Choices

To support your teen's independence:

- Encourage different choices of food or drink to support medication taking.
- Encourage your teen to ask for alone time.
- Allow your teen the choice if they feel up to having a visitor.
- Allow your teen the option of what they want to wear.



Activities to Enhance Coping

- Go on social media.
- Play video games.
- Listen to music.
- Do art activities.
- Write in a journal.
- Keep in touch with friends.
- Interactive games
- Play an instrument.
- Virtual communication
- Read a book.
- Watch movies.