

Support Team Best Practices

“A Best Practice is a method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that is used as a benchmark.”

1. Do what you can (what you love).

What do you enjoy doing when helping someone? It's different for everyone. Focus on doing what you love. Support Teams last longer and are more effective when you are doing what you love to do. And it is more joy-filled.

2. When you can (time flexible).

Not everyone has the same amount of time to give monthly on a Support Team. Just do what you can when you can, and be thankful you have a team who has your back.

3. In a coordinated way (the 59 minute meeting).

Support Team meetings are efficient and life giving. They start and end on time, and have a clear agenda to communicate, educate, and coordinate. The team leader(s), team members, patient, and family know who is doing what, when, so that everyone's gifts are maximized.

4. With a built-in support system (sharing the care).

A team approach allows you to share the care with others so that it does not all depend on one person.

5. Set clear team boundaries/expectations.

Money--Support Teams are healthier when we do not loan, give money, or pay for things for the Support Team Friend (patient). If financial needs arise, we bring it to the team to identify strategies and resources in the community to be of assistance.

Medication Management--Managing another person's medications can be dangerous, and we want to avoid causing any harm.

Medical Advice—We do not offer medical advice, but rather encourage communication with the Friend's doctor or nurse when they have medical questions.



Best Practices (continued)

6. An open door.

If you want, or need, to drop off your team at anytime, tell your team leader that you need a break or to stop. Your team leader will respond with these words, "Thanks for what you have done, if you ever want to come back, just let us know." We are all adults and we will trust you to know what is best for you.

New team members are welcome to join a team at any time. Make sure each person has an orientation to the Best Practices of Support Teams and understand how the team approach works. Connect them to <http://uabpastoralcare.org/supportteams>.



7. Green Bean Casserole Rule.

Ask what your Support Team Friend loves to eat, as well as offer what you enjoy cooking. This principle of respect also applies to all of the tasks we do for our Support Team Friend by asking what is needed, and if he or she would like what we have to offer.

8. Listen without fixing.

When offering emotional support, resist the temptation to try to fix it. Instead, ask an extra question to understand more what this is like from his or her perspective. Listening without fixing is more healing than your most brilliant solution.

9. Team Leaders delegate and coordinate.

Effective Team Leaders love to organize, and they understand that delegating tasks to team members creates healthy teams that can be sustained over time.

10. Spiritual support may be different than what you think.

Spiritual support is not about getting you to believe like me. Rather on a Support Team, it is about putting your faith into action. Spiritual support is listening to what gives your Friend purpose or meaning in life, so that you can understand better what gives them hope.