Supporting People with Cancer

The American Cancer Society (ACS) estimates that over 2 million new cancer cases will be diagnosed this year. With such a significant impact, it's important to understand how we can support our friends, family, and coworkers undergoing cancer treatment.

What to do	What NOT to do
Send a card or gift card	No unannounced visits!
Offer to run errands, etc	Don't visit if you are sick, or if your family is sick
Offer specific tasks to help	Being vague in offering help
Offer to set up a meal train	Delivering food unannounced
Keep in touch periodically- short phone calls or text	Long phone calls or visits
Walk with a co-worker over lunch	Letting fear keep you from doing or saying anything

What to say	What NOT to say
"How are you feeling?"	"I know exactly how you feel."
"I'm sorry this is happening to you."	"You are going to be OK."
"I am thinking of you."/"I'm here for you, not matter what."	"My (insert person here) had cancer, and he is (fine/awful/dead)."
"Wasn't that a productive meeting?"	Talking about the cancer all the time.
"May I email you?"	"Did you drink or smoke?"
Be honest. "I don't know what to say, but I'm here for you."	Letting fear keep you from doing or saying anything.

Reference:
American Cancer Society. (n.d.). *How to be a friend to someone with cancer*. American Cancer Society

CancerBridge