8 TIPS TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY & COMPASSIONATELY TO HELP SIBLINGS COPE

1. It is important to remember that children want a clear sense of what is going on with their sick siblings and within the family.

2. Understand and acknowledge that your feelings and actions affect your whole family. Consider what you want to communicate, and get support if you need help to do that.

3. Siblings will have questions and it is important to answer as truthfully as possible.

4. Be certain you know what your child is REALLY asking before you respond.

5. Being truthful, while respecting that children absorb information differently depending on their age, will help build trust.

6. The way you communicate and explore feelings with your children will change as they age.

7. If a topic makes you uncomfortable, or if you believe that the siblings will do better hearing about the topic from someone else, a professional (nurse, social worker, child-life specialist, palliative care clinician, spiritual leader) can be helpful.

8. Talking can be hard but keep at it and remember you are doing the best you can.