

WORKSHEET 6 · CHAPTER SIX · BUILD YOUR TEAM AND TRUST YOURSELF

Advocate for Yourself

You don't have to become an expert or say everything perfectly. You simply need the courage to begin.

Advocating for yourself can seem intimidating, especially when you're already overwhelmed, afraid, exhausted, or unsure what questions to ask. These exercises are designed to help you reconnect with your voice, identify your needs, and practice communicating more clearly with the people involved in your care.

EXERCISE 1

Reclaiming Your Voice

There is a moment for many cancer patients when they realize: *"I don't actually feel in control of what's happening to me."* This exercise is about gently taking some of that power back.

The moments I've felt most unheard during my care are...

The things I wish I had said in those moments are...

The things I'm afraid might happen if I speak up are...

Now pause. Read what you wrote with compassion, not judgment. Then remind yourself:

My voice matters here. My body, my life, my decisions.

EXERCISE 2

The Advocacy Script

When we're overwhelmed, it's hard to find the right words. So let's give you some. Practice saying these out loud — yes, actually out loud if you can.

"What are all of my options?"

"Can you explain that again in a different way?"

"I need more time to decide."

"What happens if I don't do this right now?"

"I'd like a second opinion."

"This doesn't feel right to me."

Now write your own.

One sentence that feels hardest for me to say...

One sentence that feels empowering...

You don't have to say everything perfectly. You just have to begin.

EXERCISE 3

Medical Visit Prep Sheet

When everything feels urgent, it's easy to forget what matters most to you. Use this before and after your next appointment. Print a copy for each visit.

BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

My top questions

My current concerns

Symptoms or changes I've noticed

AFTER YOUR APPOINTMENT

What I heard

What I understood

What I'm still confused about

Next steps, in my own words

A Gentle Reminder

Advocating for yourself doesn't mean you're being difficult. It means you're being involved.

It's entirely normal if this feels uncomfortable at first. Most of us were never taught how to do this. But this is part of your healing too — learning to trust your voice again.

This worksheet accompanies Chapter Six of *Reluctant Warrior: A Memoir & Breast Cancer Emotional Survival Guide* by Dr. Christina Hibbert. It is a reflective exercise, not therapy or medical care. If it brings up more than you expected, that makes sense — please consider bringing it to someone who can sit with you in it.