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Supporting Trans Loved Ones Through Top Surgery

This is a big, yet positive, step in your loved one's transition journey. They are having top surgery and there are ways that you can support them at this time.

Setting Expectations

It's a good idea for you to have a conversation with your loved one about what to expect after they have their top surgery. This conversation should revolve around what you should expect and what their surgeon has let them know about the surgery so that you can best support them. This conversation should also revolve around what your capacity is to support them after surgery.

For instance if you are squeamish it would be a good idea to let your loved one know that well you will help them with bandages, the sight of blood and open wounds does make you squeamish. You can let them know any negative reactions you have to this is not based on them or the appearance of their surgery. Not everyone can handle stuff like this. The more you know about the surgery, and the more that your loved one knows how you will and won't be able to support them the smoother recovery process and they will have.

Remember That This Is About Them

Remember that this is about your loved ones top surgery and is about them. It is not about you. Since you have decided to support them as they masculinize their chest, you're already helping them get through this emotionally difficult, yet positive, time in their life just by being there. Here are some tips, resources, and advice on how to provide emotional and physical support during and after/recovery from top surgery:

1. Educate Yourself: Educate yourself on the surgical procedure, risks, and aftercare process. This will allow you to understand what your brother is going through and provide better support.

2. Be Supportive: Let your brother know that you support their decision and that you are there for them. It is important to listen to their concerns, fears, and feelings. Provide them with a safe and non-judgmental space to talk about their experiences.

3. Help with Preparations: Offer to help with preparations before and after surgery. This can include arranging transportation, cooking meals, and helping with household chores.

4. Be Present: Be present during the surgery process, if possible. This can provide comfort and support to your brother during a potentially stressful and emotional time. Be available to engage and ask questions to the health care providers for clarity.

5. Offer Emotional Support: Top surgery can be an emotional and overwhelming experience. Offer emotional support to your loved one by checking in with them regularly, providing words of encouragement, and validating their feelings.

6. Physical Care: After surgery, your brother may need physical assistance. Offer to help with tasks such as dressing, bathing, and medication management. Follow the doctor's instructions for wound care and medication management.

7. Access Supportive Resources: Encourage your loved one to access supportive resources such as trans support groups, therapy, and peer support. These resources can provide additional support during and after the surgical process.

8. Respect Boundaries: Everyone heals at their own pace, so respect your brother's boundaries and needs. Allow them to take the time they need to heal physically and emotionally.

It is important to remember that everyone's experience with top surgery is different, so be open to your loved one's needs and experiences. Supporting them through this process can help them feel loved, validated, and cared for during an important time in their transition journey.