



Cancer and Your Mental Health: Emotions Need Treatment Too

Online version with active resource links at: <http://cancer-help.me/CancerEmotions>

Feeling Down or Worried? Talk about it!

Emotional distress and symptoms of depression and anxiety are normal and commonly experienced with a diagnosis of cancer. People coping with cancer often report feeling overwhelmed, sad, scared, angry, lonely, and even guilty.

Life changes, fatigue, and treatment side effects can all impact emotions. Physical changes can affect self-esteem and confidence. Work and family roles may change. People often feel grief from these losses and changes.

Ignoring these feelings can make it harder to cope with treatment and impact overall health. Identifying and treating troubling feelings, behaviors, and stress is an important part of your cancer care. Try to talk openly with your health care team about how you are feeling. This will help you help them to create a mental health treatment plan.

Content adapted from websites below.

Support for individuals with cancer No matter the degree of your emotional struggle, seeking support can help you cope. Support groups, online communities, one-on-one appointments are some of the ways to find help. Resources are available at many cancer centers and in the community. Mental health professionals who specialize in working with people who have cancer include psychologists, licensed counselors, social workers, and psychiatrists. Expressive therapists, such as art and music therapists, can also provide excellent interventions for people coping with cancer.

Treatment for depression and anxiety...and other tricky emotions

Psychotherapy (counseling) and medication management are the two primary treatment approaches for depression and anxiety. Depending upon the severity of your symptoms, you may benefit from therapy, medication, or a combination of the two.

Psychotherapy

With psychotherapy (counseling), mental health professionals, such as psychologists, social workers, and counselors can help you better understand your feelings, manage stress, learn better ways to cope, and problem solve challenges. Therapy can be short or long term, virtual, or in-person.

Medication

There are many different medications for depression and anxiety and selection of appropriate medication will be based on the severity of your symptoms, potential side effects, other medications taken, and your medical history. Your oncologist may be willing to prescribe your medication for depression or anxiety, but a referral to a psychiatrist may also be made if further medication management is needed.

Get Moving

[Physical Activity](#) is proven to improve your quality of life which includes feelings of distress.

Local Organizations providing support for anyone impacted by cancer:

Cancer Wellness Center	Northern Suburbs	Cancerwellness.org	847-509-9595	Programas en Español
Gilda's Club Chicago	Chicago	Gildasclubchicago.org	312-464-9900	Programas en Español
Living Well Cancer Resource Center	Far West Suburbs	Livingwellcrc.org	630-262-1111	
The Cancer Support Center	South Suburbs	CancerSupportCenter.org	708-798-9171	
Wellness House in Chicago	Northwest & West Suburbs	Wellnesshouse.org	630-323-5150	

Access an interactive map of these local resources at: <http://cancer-help.me/communitycancerresourcecenters>

Resources for Additional Information:

- [American Cancer Society, Depression](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Anxiety, Fear, and Depression](#)
- [NCCN, Patient and Caregiver Resources, Advocacy and Support Groups](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Depression](#)
- [NIH, Depression \(PDQ®\)](#)
- [NIH, Learning to Relax](#)
- [CancerCare.org, Coping With Sadness Throughout and After Treatment](#)
- [CancerCare.org, How to Recognize and Change Negative Thought](#)

Recursos en Español:

- [NIH, Instituto Nacional Del Cáncer, Cómo hacer frente al cáncer](#)
- [NIH, Instituto Nacional Del Cáncer, Depresión \(PDQ®\)–Versión para pacientes](#)
- [CancerCare.org, Consejería para lidiar mejor con un diagnóstico de cáncer](#)