

## Navigating Cancer: Your Guide to Emotional Well-Being

A cancer diagnosis is an unexpected life event that profoundly disrupts an individual's physical and emotional well-being. The array of symptoms associated with cancer and its treatments, such as pain, fatigue, nausea, and changes in appearance, are well-documented sources of significant distress. These physical burdens often contribute to a cascade of difficult emotions, including intense fear, anxiety, depression, anger, and feelings of helplessness.

Evidence-based interventions demonstrate that individuals can learn and implement effective strategies to mitigate the psychological impact of their diagnosis and improve their overall quality of life.

**Stay Informed:** Understanding your treatment, potential side effects, and how to manage them in advance can reduce anxiety and give you a sense of control.

**You are not alone:** You don't have to go through this alone. Connect with family, friends and support groups. Sharing experiences with others can alleviate the emotional burden. Mental health professionals can also provide a safe space to explore your feelings.

**Allow yourself to Feel and Process your emotions at your own pace;** It's okay to feel a whole range of emotions. Acknowledge these feelings without judgment. Explore stress-reduction techniques that work for you or simply spending quiet time in nature.

### Manage Fatigue by using energy conservation strategies:

- Pace Yourself: Break down tasks into smaller, manageable chunks with short breaks in between.
- Simplify and Organize: sit while dressing or cooking and keep frequently used items within easy reach.
- Prioritize tasks: Do most important tasks during peak energy.

### Finding Meaning and Purpose in Everyday Life

Even amidst challenges, connecting with what matters most can be a powerful anchor.

Discover Purpose in Your Daily Activities.

Engage Mindfully: Whether it's your job, a hobby, or even daily chores, look for aspects that resonate with your values or give you a sense of accomplishment or skill.

Shape Your Day: If possible, try to adjust your responsibilities or how you approach them to make them more meaningful to you.

Be Fully Here: Try to fully immerse yourself in your current experience. Savoring small moments can uncover their hidden meaning.

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Tune Into Your Senses: Notice the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures around you. This simple practice can ground you in the present.

Find Your Outlet: Explore activities that allow you to express yourself. The act of creating can be deeply fulfilling.

Consider Your Impact: Thinking about the positive influence you'd like to have can provide direction and purpose to your current actions.

Nature's Embrace: Spending time in nature can evoke feelings of awe, wonder, and connection to the world around you.

Spiritual Exploration: If you have spiritual or religious beliefs, engaging in related practices can be a profound source of comfort and meaning. This can also include meditation, philosophical reading, or quiet contemplation.

This journey is uniquely yours. By actively engaging in these coping strategies and tailoring them to your individual needs, in consultation with your healthcare providers, you can navigate the path ahead with greater resilience and well-being.

## Resources

Your emotional health is important. To learn more or to get additional support, contact your oncology team, call or send a MyChart message, to get a referral for Psychology at Baptist MD Anderson or contact us at (904) 376-3800 Baptist Behavioral Health.

## Other Resources

### American Psychosocial Oncology Society

<https://apos-society.org/people-affected-by-cancer/resources-for-people-affected-by-cancer/>

### American Cancer Society

<https://www.cancer.org/support-programs-and-services/resource-search.html>