



Cancer support: Dealing with emotions

February is National Cancer Prevention Month

The time after a cancer diagnosis can be difficult. Everyone deals with cancer in their own way. The reality is that no one is prepared to deal with it in the beginning, and feelings of stress, anxiety and fear are normal, justified and to some degree, unavoidable.

Coping with stress

While the path ahead may seem confusing and scary, there are many ways you can lower your stress.

- **Try guided imagery.** Using your imagination can take you to a calm, peaceful place. Complete guided imagery on your own, with an instructor or scripts.
- **Do something active.** Try whatever level of movement you can manage in your current state.
- **Connect with others.** Tell a family member or friend you're feeling stressed. Sometimes just talking about it makes it feel less overwhelming.
- **Join a support group.** It helps to connect with people who are going through the same things you are. Find a local group here: cancer.org/treatment/support-programs-and-services.html
- **Let your feelings out.** Talk, laugh, cry and express anger when you need to. Talking about your feelings is healthy.
- **Do something you enjoy.** Work on a hobby or a creative activity, read, watch movies or play with a pet.
- **Start a journal.** Writing about things that are bothering you may help.
- **Remember to laugh.** Watch a silly video, spend time with people who make you laugh and/or find funny books or audio programs.
- **Practice gratitude.** Gratitude is linked to your sense of wellbeing and it can boost your inner strength. Appreciating what is important to you and being thankful for it is a good way to practice gratitude.

Building resilience

Resilience is the ability to recover quickly from difficulties and bounce back after stressful situations.

- **Accept change.** While you can't change what happens, you can change how you feel.
- **Maintain a hopeful outlook.** Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.
- **Take good care of yourself.** Do things that you enjoy and find ways to relax.

Seeking help

If stressful feelings are getting in the way of your ability to carry on with daily activities and nothing seems to help, consider speaking with a counselor or therapist. They can help you work through the emotions of cancer by simply listening to your worries and anything else you feel like talking about.

Sources: healthwise.net, oligonation.org