

Mental and Emotional Health

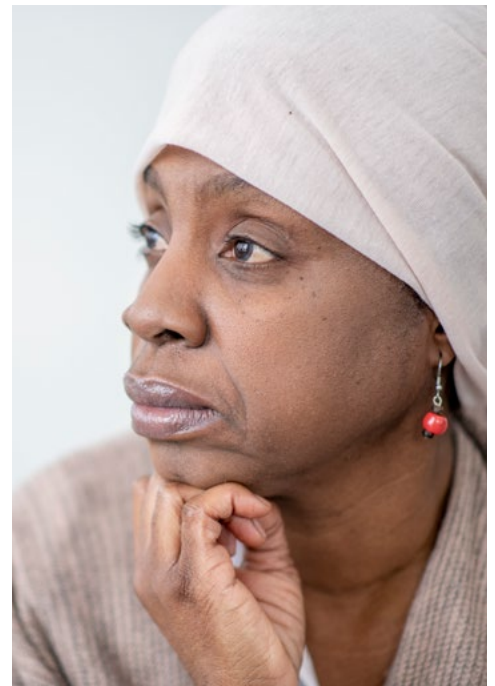
Cancer can be an emotionally traumatic experience for you and your loved ones. It's okay to ask for help.

WHAT EMOTIONS DO PEOPLE WITH CANCER COMMONLY EXPERIENCE?

As someone living with cancer, you may experience difficult emotions—such as anxiety and fear—during and even after treatment. If you have feelings that overwhelm or concern you, or that go on for more than two weeks, please talk to your healthcare team.

Some of these feelings may include but are not limited to:

- Anxiety and fear of reoccurrence
- Stress or sadness about changes to your body, appearance, cognition, energy level, etc.
- Depression
 - Sadness that doesn't go away
 - Ongoing fatigue
 - Feelings of helplessness or hopelessness, as if life has no meaning
 - Moodiness/irritability
 - A hard time thinking or concentrating
 - No interest in the hobbies and activities you used to enjoy
 - Sleep problems
 - Avoidance of family interactions or other responsibilities
- Challenges to spirituality/religion
- Concerns about relationships/intimacy
- Concerns about employment and social commitments
- Post-traumatic stress
- Survivor's guilt





WHO CAN HELP ME MANAGE MY MENTAL HEALTH DURING CANCER TREATMENT?

There are many resources that can help you navigate mental health concerns and link you to various forms of support.

- Mercy's patient navigator: 410-332-4259
- Mercy's social work team: 410-951-7937, 410-332-4652
- Mental health professionals (which you can find at <https://www.psychologytoday.com>), including:
 - Psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse practitioners
 - Psychologists
 - Social workers
 - Marriage and family counselors
- Local cancer support programs:
 - Hopewell Cancer Support
 - Hope Connections Cancer Support
 - Wellness House of Annapolis
 - Smith Center for the Arts
- Faith-based communities
- Online support groups



CAN INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE HELP IMPROVE MY MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH?

You may want to consider adding alternative therapies to your treatment plan to more holistically address the mental and physical symptoms of cancer and cancer treatment.

Please check with your oncology team before undergoing any of these treatments.

For emergency mental health needs, please call 988 immediately.

If you are experiencing... You may want to try...

Anxiety

- Acupuncture
- Massage
- Mindfulness exercises
- Relaxation
- Hypnosis
- Meditation
- Music therapy

Fatigue

- Massage
- Physical activity
- Mindfulness exercises
- Relaxation

Nausea and vomiting

- Acupuncture
- Deep breathing exercises
- Music therapy
- Aromatherapy
- Hypnosis

Pain

- Acupuncture
- Hypnosis
- Music therapy
- Aromatherapy
- Massage

Sleep problems

- Acupuncture
- Mindfulness exercises
- Relaxation
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Physical activity
- Yoga

Stress

- Acupuncture
- Hypnosis
- Massage
- Physical activity
- Tai chi
- Aromatherapy
- Laughter therapy
- Music therapy
- Reiki
- Yoga



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH CANCER

If you are a young adult with cancer, you may be facing challenges like:

- **Social isolation:** Your friends may not understand or relate to your experience, as they are likely focused on obtaining degrees, building their careers and/or starting a family.
- **Fertility concerns:** Some cancer treatments may impact your ability to have biological children. If you plan on starting a family in the future, make sure to tell your oncology team before beginning treatment.
- **Financial needs:** In addition to all of the other financial responsibilities that come with being an adult, you'll also need to factor in the ongoing costs of medical care and maintaining health insurance.
- **Survivorship:** You may face medical complications, ongoing side effects, ongoing treatment and monitoring, and psychosocial challenges, such as depression, anxiety and fear of reoccurrence.

Resource

What it offers

Cancer Care

www.cancercare.org

- Counseling program
- Financial assistance program
- Online support groups

Cancer Match

www.cancermatch.com

- Networking with other survivors

LIVESTRONG

www.livestrong.org

- Fertility support
- Survivorship resources

Stupid Cancer

www.stupidcancer.org

- Meetups
- Resources for patients and caregivers

The Ulman Foundation

www.ulmanfoundation.org

- Networking with other survivors
- Activities
- Support groups

Young Survival Coalition

www.youngsurvival.org

- Resources for young women with breast cancer



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR PARENTS WITH CANCER

If you are a parent or grandparent who has been diagnosed with cancer, it is important to sit your children/grandchildren down and discuss the diagnosis, the treatment, survivorship and how their lives will be impacted. It is recommended that you:

- Prepare what you want to say beforehand and determine who you think should be present for the discussion.
- Consider the children's age while preparing.
- Have the discussion as soon as possible. Children, regardless of age, are able to sense when something is wrong. The earlier you discuss your diagnosis, the easier it will be for the kids to manage their stress.
- Set the tone. Children will respond to your response.
- Validate the children's feelings. Encouraging them to avoid strong or heavy feelings will ultimately cause them more distress.

If you are unsure how to proceed, seek professional guidance and check out the resources below:

Resource

What it offers

American Cancer Society

www.cancer.org

800-227-2345

- Written material for children of various age groups

Cancer Care

www.cancercare.org

800-813-4673

- Clinicians to address concerns and offer support
- Written material

Local cancer support groups

- Hopewell Cancer Support children's program
- Wellness House of Annapolis children's program





MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS OF PEOPLE WITH CANCER

Being a caregiver for someone with cancer can take a big emotional toll. To alleviate some of the stress:

- Be sure to take care of yourself.
- Involve the person with cancer in the decision-making process.
- Utilize professional help as needed.
- Don't try to do everything by yourself. Ask for help from family, friends and community programs.

Resources

American Cancer Society
www.cancer.org/caregiving

**National Institute of Health -
National Cancer Institute**
www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/coping/caregiver-support

Cancer Care
www.cancercare.org

What they offer

- Book recommendations
- Support groups
- Videos
- Workshops
- Written material

