

Emotional Concerns After Treatment Has Ended

For many people, the end of treatment can be a time of mixed feelings and unexpected stress. Many people also find themselves unsure of how to move forward, wondering, “Now what?” This fact sheet will discuss:

- Emotions many post-treatment survivors may feel
- The importance of communication
- Changes in your life and the ‘new normal’
- The benefits of support groups and organizations



What Are Common Emotions Faced by Survivors?

You may feel one thing, and then another, or conflicting emotions at the same time. It's common for the end of treatment to bring many feelings about everything you experienced. Here are some common feelings people have:

- Joy and relief
- A sense of accomplishment
- Anger or sadness about having gone through such a serious illness
- Guilt for completing treatment when others weren't able to do so
- Anxiety and fear about the cancer coming back
- Confusion about what you've been through and concern about the future

You may feel all of these emotions, none of them, or some of them at different times. This is completely normal.



How Important Is Communication After Treatment?

Talking with others about your experience can be very helpful, but there are times when communication is hard.

Family and friends can provide much comfort and support during this time. But you can still feel isolated from those around you. Loved ones might not be fully aware of all the emotional challenges that can come after treatment is over. They may be ready to move on when you are not.

It is important to be able to talk openly with your health care team. You should tell the members of your health care team about any emotional side effects you feel after treatment. They can give you tips for coping. These can include counselors or support groups in your area. For example, CancerCare social workers can provide emotional support and guidance after treatment is complete.



How Do I Deal With the ‘New Normal’?

Another concern for many is that life after treatment is never exactly the same. They must get used to a “new normal.” Understanding what this means can take time. This process may involve:

- Reflecting on what you’ve been through
- Identifying changes you might want to make in your life
- Recognizing what you’ve learned and what has changed about yourself
- Think about your personal relationships or professional goals
- Discovering new ways of finding meaning and fulfillment

Above all, it is important to recognize that you have gone through a major experience in your life. What is important to you may change. The way you see your goals, your ideals, interests and needs may no longer be the same, and all of this is alright.



How Can Support Groups and Organizations Help Me?

Joining a support group for post-treatment survivors, such as those offered by CancerCare, can allow you to share with and learn from others who are facing similar issues. These issues may include fear of the cancer coming back, living with uncertainty, lingering side effects and going back to work.

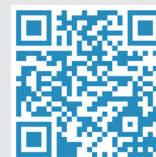
CancerCare offers support groups at various times of the year. Our oncology social workers can help find the right resources for you. To learn more, visit www.cancercare.org or call 800-813-HOPE (4673).

CancerCare® Can Help

Founded in 1944, CancerCare is the leading national organization providing free support services and information to help people manage the emotional, practical and financial challenges of cancer. Our comprehensive services include resource navigation, counseling and support groups over the phone, online and in-person, educational workshops, publications and financial and co-payment assistance. All CancerCare services are provided by master’s-prepared oncology social workers and world-leading cancer experts.

To learn more, visit www.cancercare.org or call **800-813-HOPE (4673)**.

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