

Caregiving requires time and energy focused on your loved one with cancer, but it is also important to take care of yourself. Counseling is one of the best ways to practice self-care. This fact sheet discusses:

- The role of oncology social workers
- How counseling can help you emotionally
- The practical benefits of counseling



What Are Oncology Social Workers?

Oncology social workers work specifically with people who are impacted by cancer. They can help find resources and other supportive services. When they are accredited for your area, they can offer counseling. CancerCare has a staff of oncology social workers who can help. Call 1-800-813-HOPE (4673) for more information.



The Benefits of Counseling for Caregivers

Coping with the stress of caregiving. Whether facing a loved one's cancer diagnosis for the first time or fearing it could come back, caregiving can be stressful. Counseling provides a safe space to discuss the variety of situations you may face, as well as learning and practicing coping skills to alleviate the stress.

The importance of self-care. Being a good caregiver requires taking care of yourself. It is important to keep yourself healthy, both physically and emotionally. This includes a proper diet, exercise and healthy sleeping patterns. Counseling can help you take care of yourself, as well as your loved one.

Coping with loneliness. Caregiving can feel isolating at times. An oncology social worker can help with feelings of isolation and loneliness. Feeling supported can better help you cope with your loved one's diagnosis.

How to talk to your loved ones. You may find it hard to talk about cancer with friends, family, or even your loved one. A counselor can help you find ways to healthily communicate and discuss what is going on.



Counseling to Stay Organized and Prepared

Counseling can give you practical advice in addition to emotional advice.

Tools to stay organized. You may need to schedule appointments, administer medications, or complete paperwork. An oncology social worker can help you find specific tools to manage your loved one's care and help you feel less burdened.

Help find resources. You may feel overwhelmed with information and unsure about where to seek other helpful services. A counselor may be able to help you find resources both locally and nationally. This includes, but is not limited to, home health care, financial aid, food, and transportation assistance.

HIPAA and insurance information. A counselor can help you understand health laws and make sense of your loved one's health insurance. If you are concerned about maintaining your loved one's privacy, HIPAA is a law that controls who medical information is shared with. An oncology social worker can help explain this and more.

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)**.

Facebook: facebook.com/CancerCare | **Instagram:** @CancerCareUS | **Twitter:** @CancerCare



Edited by Dina Smith, LMSW

This fact sheet is supported by the Anna Fuller Fund, Bristol Myers Squibb and a grant from Genentech.