

Counseling to Better Cope With a Cancer Diagnosis

Counseling provides a safe space to share emotions and find ways to overcome challenges. This fact sheet covers how counseling can help with:

- The powerful emotions that come with cancer
- The need for reliable information and clear communication
- How to manage your practical needs such as insurance or returning to work



Help With Strong Emotions

Cancer can lead to anxiety, depression, stress and more. Oncology social workers are experts in helping people find ways to cope, including:

Ways to cope with cancer. A cancer diagnosis can be devastating and make your life complicated. An oncology social worker can help identify your feelings and explore ways to manage anxiety, stress and fears.

The value of support groups. Support groups are places to meet people who share your experience with cancer, whether related to your diagnosis, stage in life, status as a caregiver or more.

Relaxation techniques. Social workers can often identify ways to meditate and relax that can keep you centered and mindful throughout your cancer experience, including breathing exercises, yoga and more.



Information and Communication

You may feel that the diagnosis is yours alone to cope with and isolate yourself from others. The amount of new information about the diagnosis and treatment can also be overwhelming. An oncology social worker can help you:

Talk to your loved ones about cancer. Confronting a cancer diagnosis together may help you and your loved ones. What to say about cancer, how to say it and how much information to share with a child, or any other loved one, are common concerns.

Improve communication with your health care team. Your relationship with your health care team can make a big difference. The more you feel that you can discuss any matters of concern, the better you are likely to feel. An oncology social worker can provide advice and guidance.

Find reliable information. One of the biggest challenges for people with cancer is sorting through different treatment options. Oncology social workers can help you find reliable information from trustworthy sources to help you make an informed decision about treatment.



Practical Support and Guidance

The need to manage medical appointments, organize finances and understand new treatment and insurance terminology can be a challenge.

Organize your time. Life can be complicated even before a cancer diagnosis. An oncology social worker can help find ways to keep track of appointments, medications and more.

Manage financial challenges. Cancer is an expensive illness. Even with health insurance, most people will have out-of-pocket costs for their medical care. Oncology social workers can help connect you to financial assistance options that best fit your needs. This can include co-payments for medications, transportation assistance and assistance with living expenses.

Understand your rights as a patient and your insurance. Knowing who to contact, what your rights are as a patient or returning to work and details about your insurance, are all vital to your cancer treatment. An oncology social worker can also help with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

CancerCare® Can Help

For over 80 years, CancerCare has empowered millions of people affected by cancer through free counseling, resource navigation, support groups, educational resources, advocacy and direct financial assistance. Our oncology social workers improve the lives of people diagnosed with cancer, caregivers, survivors and the bereaved, by addressing their emotional, practical and financial challenges.

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

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