



Coping with Cancer: Managing the emotional side of a cancer diagnosis

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Rocky Mountain Blood Cancer Conference

+ My background



- Clinical Assistant Professor at University of Denver
- Fellowship-trained Clinical Health Psychologist at Colorado Blood Cancer Institute
- PhD in Counseling Psychology from University of Maryland
- Research and clinical interests in oncology

+ Overview

- Addressing emotions related to cancer
- Stages of emotions
- Social support
- Advocating for yourself
- Resources



+ Exercise

- Write down one word about how you are feeling right now
- Write down one word about a situation that is on your mind

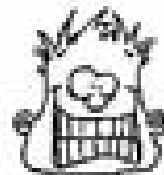




EXHAUSTED



CONFUSED



ECSTATIC



GUILTY



SUSPICIOUS



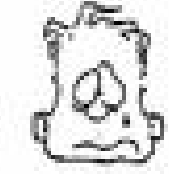
ANGRY



HYSTERICAL



FRUSTRATED



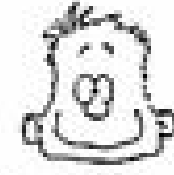
SAD



CONFIDENT



EMBARRASSED



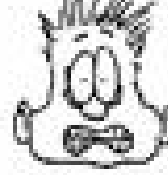
HAPPY



MISCHIEVOUS



DISGUSTED



FRIGHTENED



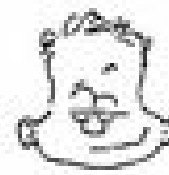
ENRAGED



ASHAMED



CAUTIOUS



SMUG



DEPRESSED



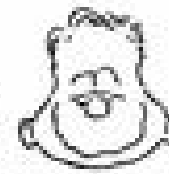
OVERWHELMED



HOPEFUL



LONELY



LOVESTRUCK



JEALOUS



BORED



SURPRISED



ANXIOUS



SHOCKED



SHY

+ Normal Emotions

- Anything you are feeling is normal!
- Possibilities:
 - Depressed
 - Angry
 - Scared
 - Denial
 - Relief
 - Hopeful
 - Shocked
 - Lonely
 - Sadness
 - Fear
 - Guilt
 - Anxious



+ Relaxation exercises

- Breathing Exercises
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Guided Imagery
- Meditation/Mindfulness



+ How do the pieces fit together?



+ The cancer journey

- Diagnosis
- Waiting
- Treatment
- Grief
- Fear of Recurrence
- Survivorship
- What comes next?



+ Difficult situations

- Telling family and friends
- Fear of the unknown
- Getting advice and suggestions
- Fear of recurrence
- Waiting!
- Going back for tests, scans, visits
- Making healthcare decisions
- Others



+ Suggestions

- Get organized
- Be your own advocate
- Bring a loved one to appointments
- Consider getting a second opinion
- Get support



+ Depression

- If painful emotions:
 - Last for 2 weeks or longer
 - Are impacting your life and ability to do things that are important to you
 - Then talk to your healthcare team or a specialist or therapist about treatment
- Treatment:
 - Individual or Group Psychotherapy
 - Medication
 - Relaxation and
 - Stress Management Skills
 - Communication Skills
 - Exercise and Diet



+ Coping

- Active vs. Passive (avoidance) coping
- Positive coping strategies
- Negative coping strategies



+ Strategies

- Build a good foundation
 - Sleeping
 - Eating
 - Social Support
- Find things you enjoy doing
 - Even small breaks help
 - Learn to say no to things you don't
- Ask for... and accept help!





Ideas that have helped others

- Journaling
- Creative expression
- Acupuncture/massage/healing touch
- Spirituality
- Getting support
- Gentle exercise
- Benefit finding and positive growth



+ Relationships with others

- Remember that others are affected too
- Open communication
- How to talk to loved ones
- Relationships take work
- Role differences



+ Resources



- American Cancer Society
 - (800) ACS-2345
 - www.cancer.org
- Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
 - <http://www.lls.org/>
- Cancer Care
 - (800) 813-HOPE
 - www.cancercare.org
- Cancer Survivors Project
 - www.cancersurvivorsproject.org
 - Cancer and Careers
 - www.cancerandcareers.org
- Cancer Hope
 - 877-HOPENET
 - www.cancerhopenetwork.org
- Cancer Survival Toolbox
 - Available at 877-TOOLS-4-U
 - <http://www.canceradvocacy.org/toolbox/>
- A Cancer Survivor's Almanac, Charting Your Journey, Hoffman, B, ed. (Wiley 2004)
 - www.canceradvocacy.org
 - 888-650-9127
- LIVESTRONG
 - (866) 673-7205
 - www.livestrong.org
- National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (NCCS)
 - (877) 622-7937
 - www.canceradvocacy.org

+ Counseling Resources



- Check with your cancer center
- Meet with a psychologist, social worker, or counselor
- Professional Psychology Clinic at University of Denver (303) 871-3626
- Contact me if you have questions:
 - Nicole Taylor, PhD
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 - www.drnicoletaylor.com