



Managing Emotional Challenges after Transplant

Celebrating a Second Chance at Life Survivorship Symposium

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Managing Emotional Challenges after Transplant

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Learning Objectives

- Identify common emotional challenges after transplant
- Describe strategies for managing emotional challenges
- Understand the differences between emotional distress and clinical depression
- Identify different forms of emotional support available to those undergoing transplant and transplant survivors

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Prevalence of Emotional Distress in Cancer Patients

- You are not alone!
- According to the National Cancer Institute about half of people with cancer report emotional distress.¹

¹ National Cancer Institute. (nd). *Adjustment to cancer: Anxiety and distress*. <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/coping/feelings/anxiety-distress-pdq>

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Mind and Body Connection

- Healthy Diet
- Exercise
- Restorative Sleep



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Healthy Diet

- Choose good carbs
- Pay attention to protein – fish, poultry nuts and beans are the best choices
- Limit food high in saturated fats and avoid foods with trans fat.
- Choose a fiber filled diet – whole grains, vegetables and fruits.
- Eat more vegetables and fruits – look for color and variety.
- Water is best to quench your thirst. Avoid sugary drinks.

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Healthy Diet

- Calcium is important – not just in dairy products, also found in green leafy vegetables, dried fruit, almonds, canned salmon, whey protein.
- Be mindful of your salt intake
- Moderate alcohol intake

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Exercise

**Always consult your doctor before
beginning any type of exercise program!!**

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Physical Benefits of Exercise

- Keeping active can help you both physically and emotionally!
- Helps fight fatigue
- Helps to maintain and / or rebuild strength
- Helps to maintain balance
- Good for the heart – helps to reduce heart disease

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Emotional Benefits of Exercise

- Reduces stress & anxiety
- Reduces feelings of depression
- Increases energy level
- Helps to maintain / improve cognitive function
- Improves sleep

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Getting Started with an Exercise Program

- Any exercise regimen you do must take into account any health conditions/ limitations you might have!
- Remember: Start slow and work your way up
- An ideal exercise regimen would include both cardio and strengthening exercises
- It does not have to be overly strenuous to be beneficial.

**Reminder: Always consult your doctor
before beginning any type of exercise program!!**

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Sleep

- Sleep is our body's way of restoring itself for the next day of the week.
- Recommended 7-8 hours of sleep per night
- Practice good sleep hygiene

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Tips for a Good Night's Sleep

- Exercise
- De-stress
- Have a bedtime ritual
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine – limit fluid intake before bedtime
- Unplug from electronic devices before getting in bed
- Reserve the bed for sleeping and intimacy

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Foundation for Better Physical & Emotional Health

- Won't erase challenges
- Stabilizes physical health handle
- Equips you for emotional challenges



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Common Emotions Experienced After Transplant

- Depression
- Frustration with the “New Normal”
- Grief over loss of roles or activities associated with life before cancer
- Anxiety – Fear of recurrence “Scanxiety”
- Survivor’s guilt
- Delayed reaction to diagnosis and treatment

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Other Common Emotions

- Sadness –Friends may not understand ongoing challenges
- Reluctance to make plans
- Emotional support may be needed post transplant (Support is available)

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Depressive Feelings vs. Clinical Depression

Depressive Feelings

- Fairly common in general population
- Duration of feelings –short lived (few hours – few days)
- Does not significantly interfere with a person's normal functioning
- Diminishes with interventions

Clinical Depression

- Reduced appetite / weight loss
- Lack of energy: small tasks = great effort
- Slowed thinking, concentrating, difficulty with making decisions
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Feelings don't let up

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Fear of Recurrence

- Long-term relationship with your oncologist
- Know your body
- Follow up on health issues
- Be your own advocate
- Don't worry until you have something to worry about
- One day at a time

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Coping Techniques

- Exercise
- Mindfulness / guided imagery (CDs, MP3, apps - Insight Timer, Health Journeys, etc.)
- Journaling / creative writing
- Doing a favorite activity in a different way
- New hobbies
- Volunteering
- Knowledge is power!

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Additional Strategies for Coping / Support

- Create your “tribe” – utilize the skills of others
- Prayer / meditation
- Spiritual support
- Support groups – in person & online
- Professional counseling – sign of strength to get the support and perspective of an objective professional

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Facing Forward

- Shift in Priorities
- Take Care of Unfinished Business
- Every day is a gift. Live in the NOW.
- Bucket List
- Make memories



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Questions?

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