

Gynecologic cancer, resurgence of Covid, war, inflation...how can I maintain emotional balance???

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Cancer Survivorship Institute
Enhancing Life Beyond Cancer

Objective

Provide a framework for understanding difficult emotions and thoughts in managing cancer and discuss approaches to help manage them.

Complicated feelings, like anger, guilt, uncertainty, are very common in the cancer experience.

(These feelings are also expected during a global pandemic!)

– *However, we often don't talk about them enough.*

Attitudes



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It is psychologically healthy to have both painful and complicated feelings alongside feelings like gratitude and happiness when coping with cancer.

How do we typically cope?

Problem-Solving

- Very common, generally adaptive
- Focuses on dealing with the cause of a problem by reducing or eliminating the source of stress

*However, this strategy is most effective when stressors are **controllable**.*

What can we do differently?

Components of Healthy Behavior: Self-Care



Physical activity^{1,2}



Nutritional recommendations^{1,2}



Stress reduction¹



Medical care¹

1. Cancer.net. <https://www.cancer.net/survivorship/healthy-living/healthy-living-after-cancer>. Accessed September 5, 2018.
2. Rock CL, et al. *CA Cancer J Clin*. 2012;62(4):242-274.



ACS Guidelines on Physical Activity

Physical activity is associated with a reduced risk of cancer recurrence and improved overall mortality among multiple cancer survivor groups¹



- Adults 18-64²
 - ≥150 minutes moderate or 75 minutes vigorous exercise per week
 - Muscle strength training of all muscle groups at least 2 days/week
- Adults 65 or over²
 - As above, within limits of other comorbidities
- Children³
 - 1 hour of moderate to vigorous exercise 5 days a week

1. Cormie P et al. *Epidemiol Rev.* 2017;39(1):71-92. 2. Rock CL et al. *CA Cancer J Clin.* 2013;62(4):243-274.
3. Weiss K et al. *Curr Sports Med Rep.* 2011;10(6):352-359.



Nutrition^{1,2}

- Choose food and drinks in amounts to get to and maintain ideal body weight
- Limit amounts of processed meat and red meat
- Eat at least 2½ cups of vegetables and fruits each day
- Choose whole grains instead of refined grains
- Limit alcohol to no more than 1 drink per day for women or 2 per day for men



1. Rock CL, et al. *CA Cancer J Clin*. 2012;62(4):243-274.

2. American Cancer Society. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/diet-physical-activity/diet-and-physical-activity.html>. Updated April 14, 2017. Accessed September 17, 2018.



Stress Reduction

There are several basic activities that survivors can use to manage stress:

- Engaging in activities that are enjoyable and create laughter^{1,2}
- Scheduling daily leisure time and social activities²
- Writing in a journal^{1,2}
- Practicing relaxation techniques (eg, meditation, guided imagery, breathing exercises, yoga)²
- Prioritizing tasks²
- Asking for help with daily activities²
- Attending a support group or counseling^{1,2}



1. Livestrong.org. Planning for healthy living. <https://www.livestrong.org/we-can-help/healthy-living-after-treatment/planning-for-healthy-living>. Accessed September 17, 2018.

2. Cancer.net. Managing stress. <https://www.cancer.net/coping-with-cancer/managing-emotions/managing-stress>. Accessed September 17, 2018.



Self-Compassion

- Compassion is *not* finite or zero sum
- Difficult emotions and thoughts can, and often do, *co-exist* with gratitude



If your compassion does not include yourself,
it is incomplete.

- Jack Kornfield

Clarify Priorities

What have I learned about

- my values and what's important?
- myself and my strengths?
- what I want more of in my life? less of?



Creating Meaning

1. Choose a life domain that is high priority
2. Choose a value to pursue in this domain
3. Develop goals, guided by the value
4. Take action



Being Present

Mindfulness is paying attention, on purpose, in the present, and non-judgmentally, to the unfolding of experience moment to moment.

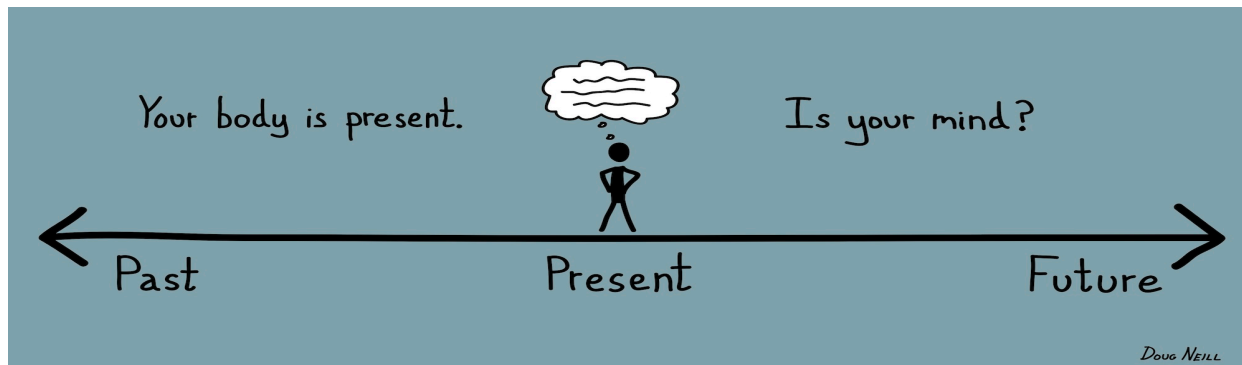
- Jon Kabat-Zinn



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Being Present

- Be still and bring your attention to your breath
- Slow breathing and do a body scan
- Notice thoughts and feelings without judgment



Summary

- **Honor** and understand complicated feelings
- Cultivate **self-compassion**
- Identify values and strengths to **create meaning**
- Be **mindful** and connect to the present moment
- **MOVE MORE!**
- *Reach out for more help*

Resources for Cancer Survivorship: Great Places to Start...

- Cancer Survival Toolbox®
 - www.canceradvocacy.org/resources/cancer-survival-toolbox/
- Facing Forward: Life After Cancer Treatment
 - www.cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/facing-forward
- National Cancer Institute, Office of Cancer Survivorship
 - cancercontrol.cancer.gov/ocs
- National Cancer Survivorship Resource Center
 - www.cancer.org/survivorshipcenter
- National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN)
 - Patient and Caregiver Resources
www.nccn.org/patients/resources/life_after_cancer/survivorship.aspx
 - Clinical Practice Guidelines:
www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/pdf/survivorship.pdf

