

- Anxiety / Depression

Five ways to manage emotions during cancer treatment

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Cancer doesn't just affect one's body, but the mind too. A cancer diagnosis can take a huge toll on the emotional health of patients, families and caregivers. Many people suffering from cancer experience significant changes to their emotional health.

A report in the Mental Health America stated that up to one-third of people treated for cancer in hospitals have a common mental health condition. Anxiety, distress, depression, and fear are some common feelings patients experience during this lifechanging experience apart from physical exhaustion, timesnownews.com reported.

The fact is, cancer and cancer treatments can cause a range of side effects, including depression and anxiety. For example, brain fog, which is a side effect of chemotherapy, can cause depression, fatigue, mental fog, and other forms of cognitive impairment. An article by the American Cancer Society suggested the link between depression and chemo brain, and identified that both should be considered.

The good news is, there is hope and help available and, in most cases, mental illness is treatable. Perhaps, it's important to recognize any physical and mental changes that you may experience and get help, which will help you feel better.

Here are some essential tips suggested by Dr. Shivangi Pawar, consultant psychotherapist, that may help you cope with emotions after a cancer diagnosis:

- Stick to a proper schedule:

Instead of getting stressed, anxious, or depressed, try to make a list of things you need to do. You will have to stay organized and carry on with the activities of your day-to-day life.

- Spend some 'me' time:

This will help you to understand your body in a better way. You will be able to notice any abnormal changes that occur in your body and get prompt treatment.

- Journaling can do the trick:

Maintain a journal about your activities, pen down your thoughts regarding what worries you, what makes you happy, what triggers your stress. Write down positive thoughts and that will help you to deal with your problems. Have an optimistic approach to life. Never give up, after all, you have come a long way. Just be true to yourself and accept that you have cancer. That will help you in coping with it and fight it.

- Try relaxation techniques:

Relaxation techniques such as meditation and yoga can help keep depression and anxiety at bay. Remember that you must opt for yoga under the guidance of an expert. Likewise, you can also walk or do aerobics on a daily basis. Don't go overboard while exercising. Also, do activities that will de-stress you. You can opt for reading, listening to music, solving puzzles, watching educational programs, painting, or gardening. Try to socialize with your family and friends. You can speak to your family members about things that steal your peace of mind. Don't let your feelings get bottled up.

- Adhere to a well-balanced and healthy diet:

Eat fresh fruits and vegetables. Avoid spicy, oily, and processed foods. Furthermore, you will have to stay hydrated. Bid adieu to smoking.

Additionally, a routine mental health screening can be helpful for cancer patients and may allow them to improve their depression or anxiety. Even counseling can help these patients to lead a quality of life.

Also, talk to other cancer patients, read about the patients who have fought cancer as that will surely motivate you, and improve your self-esteem. Remember you are worth it.