

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

CANCER SUPPORT: DEALING WITH EMOTIONS AND FEARS

The time after a cancer diagnosis can be very difficult. Everyone deals with cancer in their own way, and people react differently to stress. The reality is that no one is prepared to deal with it in the beginning, and feelings of stress, anxiety, and fear are normal, justified and to some degree, unavoidable.

Coping with stress

While the path ahead may seem confusing and scary, there are many ways you can lower your stress. You can try different things until you find what works best for you.

Tips to lower stress:

- **Try guided imagery.** It helps you use your imagination to take you to a calm, peaceful place. You can do guided imagery on your own, with audio recordings, an instructor or scripts.
- **Do something active.** Try whatever level of movement you can manage in your current state. A short walk can make a big difference.
- **Connect with others.** Tell a family member or friend that you're feeling stressed. Sometimes just talking about it makes it feel less overwhelming.
- **Join a support group.** It helps to connect with people who are going through the same things you are. Find a local group here: [cancer.org/treatment/support-programs-and-services.html](https://www.cancer.org/treatment/support-programs-and-services.html)
- **Start a journal.** Writing about things that are bothering you may help.
- **Let your feelings out.** Talk, laugh, cry, and express anger when you need to. Talking with friends, family, or a clinician about your feelings is healthy.
- **Do something you enjoy.** Work on a hobby or a creative activity, read, watch movies, or play with a pet.
- **Remember to laugh.** Laughter can help you forget about your troubles. Watch a comedy or silly video, spend time with people who make you laugh, and/or find funny books or audio programs.
- **Practice gratitude.** Gratitude is linked to your sense of well-being and it can boost your inner strength and help you bounce back. Appreciating what is important to you and being thankful for it is a good way to practice gratitude.

Sources:

soceap.magellanascend.com/HealthWiseContent/ViewContent/abn2857
soceap.magellanascend.com/HealthWiseContent/ViewContent/abn2962
oligonation.org/living-with-oligo

Building resilience

Resilience is the ability to recover quickly from difficulties and bounce back after stressful situations.

Tips to build resilience:

- **Accept that things change and look at change as a challenge rather than a threat.** You can't change what happens, but you can change how you feel about it.
- **Maintain a hopeful outlook.** Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear. Difficult or emotional situations can help you learn a lot about yourself.
- **Take good care of yourself.** Do things that you enjoy and find ways to relax your mind and body.

Seeking help

If stressful feelings are getting in the way of your ability to carry on with daily activities and nothing seems to help, consider speaking with a counselor or therapist. They can help you work through the emotions of cancer by simply listening to your worries and anything else you feel like talking about.

EAP is here to provide you with compassionate and caring support.

Go online to eap.calhr.ca.gov or call 1-866-327-4762 to get started.

