

It is common for people facing a serious illness to worry about the future and what lies ahead. A diagnosis of cancer brings many changes. Many of these changes are physical and/or emotional. For some people diagnosed with cancer these changes will be more spiritual or make them think more about the meaning of their lives and what really matters to them.

People touched by cancer often talk about experiencing three feelings: loss of control, unwanted aloneness, and loss of hope. All of these feelings can lead us to worry about the future and an uncertainty about what may lie ahead. This is a normal reaction to the roller coaster of the cancer experience that only becomes a problem if you are so overcome with worry that you are unable to enjoy things that usually bring you pleasure.

If you find that you are extremely anxious about the future, reach out to a trusted friend, clergy person, or mental health professional. Talk to your oncologist, oncology nurse, or oncology social worker about your concerns. Some fears and concerns may be unfounded and can be cleared up through a better understanding of your cancer and its treatment. There are also medications that your oncologist can prescribe that may be helpful to reduce the stress and anxiety you are feeling.

Above all, know that it is okay and even a good idea to make plans for the future. Keep moving ahead one step at a time. It is okay to feel overwhelmed at times by your worries about the future. Remember that even before you were diagnosed with cancer, you might have had the same kinds of worries about your future.

A diagnosis of cancer can make some people feel out of control of their body and their life. Having questions about the meaning of one's life is also normal. Spending some time thinking about this topic may help you to discover new goals, priorities, and possibilities. People with cancer often find that this chance to focus on what really matters can change the quality of their lives in very positive ways. The time following a cancer diagnosis can be a time to reconnect with the many different ways your life matters to you and to make the changes that are important to you.



www.CancerSupportCommunity.org
1-888-793-9355



Making a promise to yourself to spend more time with family and friends is a common way that people decide to make changes in their lives. For others it can be a chance to complete a project such as finishing a scrapbook or making a video. Still others decide to act on something they have always wanted to do such as take up a new hobby or travel. There is no right answer that will work for all people. For each person, the changes made or even the decision not to make any changes will be a personal one.

General Cancer Information, Survivorship & Support

Cancer Support Community • 888-793-9355 • www.CancerSupportCommunity.org

American Cancer Society • 800-227-2345 • www.cancer.org

CancerCare • 800-813-4673 • www.cancercare.org

Cancer.net • 888-651-3038 • www.cancer.net

Caregiver Action Network • 855-227-3640 • www.caregiveraction.org

Healthcare.gov • www.healthcare.gov

Livestrong Foundation • 866-673-7205 • www.livestrong.org

National Cancer Institute • 800-422-6237 • www.cancer.gov

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine • 888-644-6226 • www.nccam.nih.gov

Patient Advocate Foundation • 800-532-5274 • www.patientadvocate.org

CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The Cancer Support Community's (CSC) resources and programs are available free of charge. Call 888-793-9355 or visit www.CancerSupportCommunity.org for more info.

Cancer Support Helpline[®]—Have questions, concerns or looking for resources? Call CSC's toll-free Cancer Support Helpline (888-793-9355), available in 200 languages Mon–Fri, 9 am–9 pm ET.

Open to Options[®]—Preparing for your next appointment? Our trained specialists can help you create a list of questions to share with your doctor. Make an appointment by calling 888-793-9355 or by contacting your local CSC or Gilda's Club.

Frankly Speaking About Cancer[®]—Trusted information for cancer patients and their loved ones is available through publications, online, and in-person programs.

www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FranklySpeakingAboutCancer.

Services at Local CSCs and Gilda's Clubs—With the help of 170 locations, CSC and Gilda's Club affiliates provide services free of charge to people touched by cancer. Attend support groups, educational sessions, wellness programs, and more at a location near you. www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FindLocation.

MyLifeLine—CSC's private, online community allows patients and caregivers to easily connect with friends and family to receive social, emotional, and practical support throughout the cancer journey and beyond. Connect with other caregivers by joining the Caregiver Support online discussion board. Sign up at www.MyLifeLine.org.

Grassroots Network—Make sure your voice is heard by federal and state policy makers on issues affecting cancer patients and survivors by joining our Network at www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/become-advocate.

Cancer Experience Registry[®]—Help others by sharing your cancer patient or cancer caregiver experience via survey at www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org.

The Cancer Support Community provides this information as a service. This publication is not intended to take the place of medical care or the advice of your doctor. We strongly suggest consulting your doctor or other health care professionals to answer questions and learn more.

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