

People with cancer and their caregivers are under a lot of pressure. Coping with the treatments, side effects, and anxieties can be very difficult. No matter the type of treatment, most caregivers deal with issues that can be stressful at every stage of their loved one's cancer. This distress can be from feelings of vulnerability, sadness, and fear of recurrence or death. It can also be from problems that are more disabling, such as clinical depression, intense anxiety, or panic. While many emotions fade over time, some may develop into depression. Having a loved one with cancer does not mean that you should accept feeling depressed all the time.

Sadness or depression can affect your ability to carry out daily activities. It may be difficult to participate actively in your loved one's treatment. People's reactions will differ and will probably vary over time. But please know that you are not alone. It is important to talk about feeling sad or depressed with a family member, friend, clergy, and/or health care professional.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION*:

- Ongoing sad, anxious, or empty feelings
- Feeling hopeless or feeling guilty, worthless, or helpless
- Feeling irritable or restless
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once enjoyable, including sex
- Feeling tired all the time
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, or making decisions
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, or sleeping all the time
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Thoughts of death and suicide or suicide attempts
- Ongoing aches and pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease with treatment



www.CancerSupportCommunity.org

1-888-793-9355



*From the National Institute of Mental Health, Depression and Cancer, 2014

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MANAGE SADNESS AND/OR DEPRESSION:

- Talk with your family, friends, or your health care team about what you are feeling. Don't wait until you are so depressed that you find you can't function in your daily life.
- There are medications that may be helpful.
- Join a support group to hear how other caregivers are managing their emotions.
- Seek professional help from a therapist experienced in working with cancer patients and caregivers.
- Use humor—find something to laugh about every day.

- Consider prayer. Many people have shared that prayer is a useful tool in managing the roller coaster of emotions.
- Keep a journal to record and release your feelings.

If you feel so depressed that you have thoughts of suicide, please call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) to be connected to help in your area. You can also call 911 or go to a nearby emergency room.

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

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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