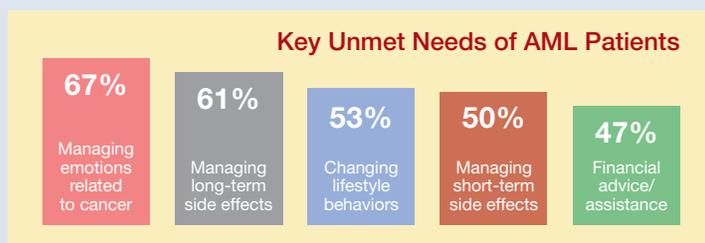


# AML: Improving Communication with Your Patients

Patients with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) are often overwhelmed by their diagnosis and its socially isolating treatments. Half of AML patients report greater anxiety and more than a third report greater fatigue and depression than the general population. A key unmet need for these patients is how to manage their emotions related to a cancer diagnosis.

Nurses, social workers, navigators, and other health professionals play a critical role in educating patients with AML, eliciting their concerns, and helping them weigh treatment options. In doing this, you can greatly improve your patients' care. This handout offers valuable tips to help improve communication.

## MANAGING EMOTIONS RELATED TO CANCER



Source: Cancer Support Community. (2020) *AML Cancer Experience Registry Report*.

## Questions to Improve Communication and Elicit Concerns

- 1 How are you feeling in general?
- 2 What is worrying you most?
- 3 With whom are you able to share these concerns?
- 4 How have you been coping with the diagnosis and treatment?
- 5 How is the cancer and/or related treatments affecting your life?
- 6 What questions do you have about your cancer or treatment?
- 7 Are there side effects impacting your quality of life? How are you managing them?

## TREATMENT GOALS

Treatment of AML can aim to:

- Put patient into complete remission (CR)
- Prolong survival and delay disease progression
- Manage symptoms
- Maintain function
- Optimize quality of life

## How to Ensure the Patients Treatment Aligns with Their Personal Goals

- 1 Understand, consider, and respect individual patient goals.
- 2 Educate patients about ALL options for treatment with benefits and risks for each one. Allow patients to ask questions after

hearing about each treatment. Hearing them all at once may be overwhelming and they may forget questions.

- a. High-dose treatment
  - b. Low-dose treatment
  - c. Targeted therapy (with/or without low-dose treatment)
  - d. Clinical trials
- 3 Encourage patients to take notes and have a family member or friend with them.
  - 4 Understand that emotions impact decision-making. Though AML treatment needs to begin as soon as possible, it is important that patients' feelings are validated and they understand their diagnosis and treatment options.

## QUALITY OF LIFE IMPACT

AML and its treatment can affect patients' functioning whether it's physically, emotionally, socially, or spiritually. Ask your patients if their disease or treatments interfere with their ability to:

- Work (lost income, challenges of disability insurance)
- Sleep
- Think clearly
- Stay emotionally healthy
- Be social/enjoy hobbies
- Maintain close relationships/be present in family life
- Be intimate with partner
- Exercise/be physically active
- Function in other ways

## HELPING PATIENTS WEIGH TREATMENT OPTIONS

Most AML patients say they want to work with their health care team to map out their treatment plan. Making decisions about cancer treatment can be overwhelming and patients need support and guidance.

With decision support, patients can:

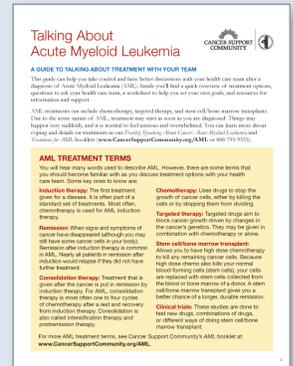
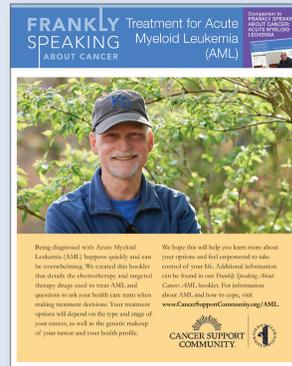
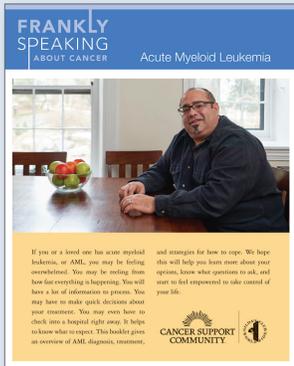
- Clarify their goals and concerns
- More clearly articulate questions
- Benefit from the information provided as a result

CSC's free decision support counseling program *Open to Options*<sup>®</sup> can help your patients. A trained specialist will work with them to develop a personal list of questions and concerns. This list can then be shared with your team before or at medical visits. Please encourage your patients to call CSC's Cancer Support Helpline (888-793-9355) to make an *Open to Options*<sup>®</sup> appointment.



## AML INFORMATION & RESOURCES

CSC provides resources and tools that can help you improve communication and shared decision making in your everyday practice. *Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Acute Myeloid Leukemia* is CSC's highly acclaimed cancer education series that provides accurate medical and psychosocial information and support resources. It includes free print materials (booklet in English and Spanish, treatment fact sheet, and discussion tool), an online program, and patient education workshop. To download or order these materials, visit [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/AML](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/AML) or call our Helpline at 888-793-9355.



## CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The Cancer Support Community's (CSC) resources and programs are available free of charge. To access any of these resources below call 888-793-9355 or visit [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org).

**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](http://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](http://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 AML patients by joining the Living with AML online discussion board. Sign up at [www.MyLifeLine.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org).

**THIS PROGRAM WAS MADE POSSIBLE WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM:**



Daiichi-Sankyo

This book is available to download and print yourself at [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/AML](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/AML). For print copies of this booklet or other information about coping with cancer, visit [Orders.CancerSupportCommunity.org](http://Orders.CancerSupportCommunity.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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