



Turn

YOUR PERSONAL "APOCALYPSE"

Into your power



**HOW TO MANAGE
PSYCHOLOGICAL SHOCK AFTER A
CANCER DIAGNOSIS AND BUILD
RESILIENCE.**

Created for cancer patients, their loved ones, students, caregivers, and anyone seeking to understand the psychological impact of a cancer diagnosis.

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Definition



Psychological shock after a cancer diagnosis

Psychological shock after a cancer diagnosis is an acute emotional, physiological, and cognitive response to sudden, distressing medical news.

"Psychological shock is an acute stress reaction triggered by unexpected or traumatic events, often overwhelming a person's emotional and cognitive processing." (APA Dictionary of Psychology)

"A cancer diagnosis can cause emotional distress, including shock, anxiety, and difficulty processing information." (National Cancer Institute)



Symptoms

Psychological shock after a cancer diagnosis

Physiological

- Increased heart rate – Tachycardia
- Dizziness or nausea
- Sudden loss of appetite or sleep disturbances
- Feeling paralyzed in response to stress

Emotional

- Denial or doubt about the diagnosis: "This couldn't be happening to me."
- Fear and anxiety about treatment, survival, or quality of life.
- Sadness, hopelessness, or anger over the loss of health and control.



Symptoms

Psychological shock after a cancer diagnosis

Cognitive

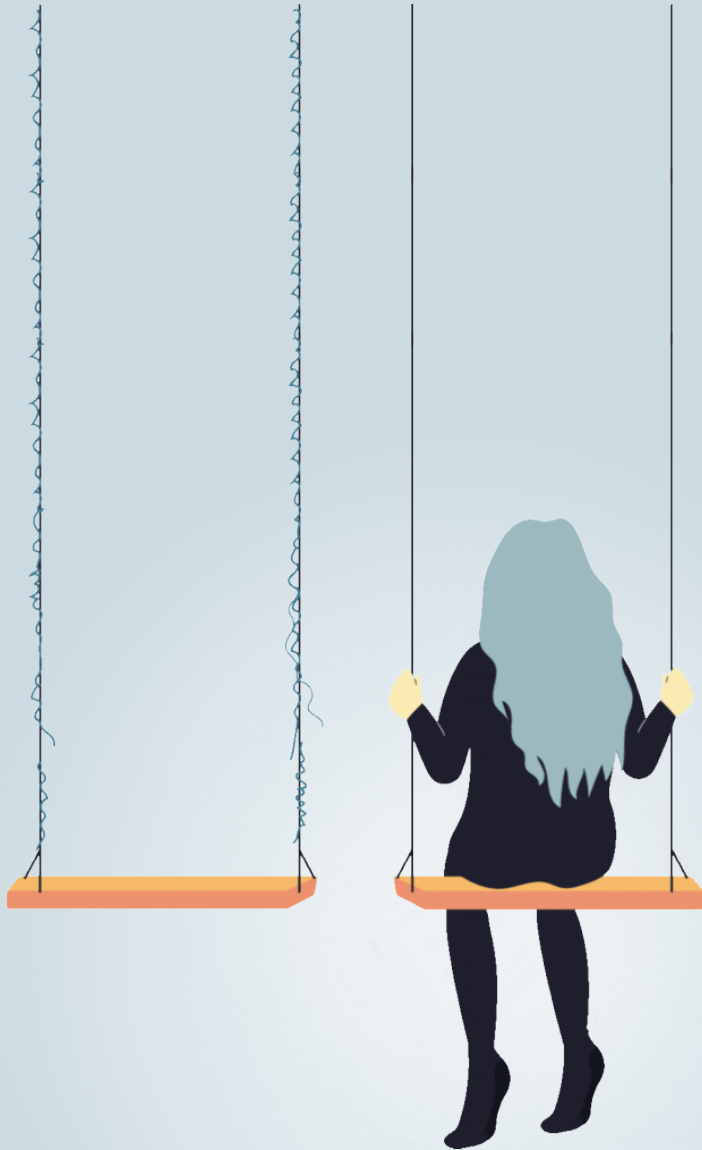
- Difficulties with attention and concentration – trouble processing information received from the doctor.
- Impairment of executive functions, including difficulties with planning, organizing, problem-solving, and making treatment-related decisions.
- Memory issues and slowed processing of seemingly simple information.



How can I overcome the psychological shock related to a cancer diagnosis?

The psychological shock caused by receiving a diagnosis can have a significant impact on our mental health.

In such moments, implementing effective coping mechanisms is crucial for managing distress and maintaining overall well-being.



Approaches such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and mindfulness-based stress management have been shown to help cancer survivors cope with distress. It's also important to recognize that these feelings are normal responses to a significant life event. By acknowledging these emotional challenges and actively seeking support, individuals can manage the psychological impact of a cancer diagnosis more effectively.

Emotional Processing and Cancer Destigmatization

- Give yourself the time to accept reality as it is.
- Every emotion is valid and deserves to be acknowledged.
- There is no "right" or "wrong" way to react to a diagnosis.
- Receiving and sharing your diagnosis is nothing to be ashamed of.
- You are not alone - It is a medical condition that anyone can face.
- Your life is in your hands. Cancer is treatable.
- A diagnosis does not define you - you are more than your illness.



Seeking Support and Psychoeducation



- **Talk to your loved one.** Share your feelings and emotions with trusted family members or friends.
- **Join support groups.** Connect with online communities of cancer survivors, cancer awareness organizations, or local support groups. Read personal stories, ask questions about topics that matter to you, and seek advice from those who have experienced similar challenges.
- **Consult a psychologist.** Consider online counseling sessions or visiting a professional therapist to receive emotional and psychological support.
- **Equip yourself with knowledge.** Read articles, brochures, and books on the psychological aspects of coping with cancer. Self-help guides and scientifically backed resources can provide valuable strategies for emotional resilience.

Gathering Information and Planning Your Treatment

- **Learn about your illness** - Rely only on trusted sources for accurate information.
- **Understand your rights and available resources** - Check what medical, financial, or psychological support is available for cancer patients in your region.
- **Talk to your oncologist** - Discuss your symptoms and any concerns openly.
- **Review treatment options** - Work with your doctor to understand available treatment methods and potential side effects.
- **Plan your treatment start date** - Coordinate with your oncologist to schedule the beginning of your treatment.
- **Prepare for hospitalization** - Gather all necessary personal items and medications in advance.



Prioritize Your Self-Care



- Breathing exercises can help reduce anxiety.
- Practice meditation. Take time to be alone, listen to your body, observe the flow of your thoughts, emotions, and feelings. Talk to yourself, and recognize that you are the creator of your own experience.
- Keep a journal. Listen to music that evokes positive emotions, paint, take care of plants, and show kindness to animals and persons in need.
- Stay physically active - dance, walk, or engage in light physical exercises to maintain your well-being.

Coping Strategies

Set Recovery as Your Goal

- What is your goal? Write down your short-term and long-term goals.
- How do you plan to achieve these goals? Break them down into steps.
- Focus on what you can control. Don't waste time searching for solutions to things beyond your reach.
- Don't rush. Achieving the desired outcome may take years.
- Keep moving forward, even when setbacks arise on your path to recovery.
- Remind yourself why you started.
- Never give up. Start again if you must.



Self-Motivation and Discipline



- Regulating your sleep will help restore the strength needed to fight cancer.
- A balanced diet will strengthen your immune system, providing your body with essential nutrients and vitamins.
- Drinking at least 1 liter of water daily will aid in flushing out harmful substances from your body.
- Taking medications as prescribed by your doctor, without skipping doses, will support the healing process.



PSYCHO-ONCOLOGY

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