

Managing the Impact of Prostate Cancer

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Goals

- Identify and understand the emotions men with prostate cancer and their caregivers may be feeling.
- Understand why these emotions are important, what they might mean, and how they may impact your life
- Discuss ways that may help a person with prostate cancer and his family/caregiver deal with those emotions.

Facts about Emotions and Cancer

- For almost everyone, the word CANCER provokes a reaction of shock, fear and worry.
- For most people, once the initial devastating pronouncement and reaction have past, their support system and natural coping skills kick in, they get a plan from the medical team, and things settle down.
- About 1 in 4 people with cancer develop symptoms of depression and/or anxiety during or after treatment.

A/D and Prostate Cancer

CancerCare and US TOO International surveyed 633 patients with prostate cancer regarding their symptoms of anxiety and depression.

- 77% said they had experienced symptoms of anxiety or depression following diagnosis.
- 94% thought it was normal for prostate cancer patients to feel anxiety and depression.
- Only 38% said they thought they could identify symptoms of anxiety or depression in themselves.

Men and Prostate Cancer

- Men tend not to seek out help for psychosocial issues.
- Women outnumber men 3:1 in cancer support groups.
- Men tend to not want to appear emotionally vulnerable, in need of care, or to ask for help.
- Anxiety can impact treatment decisions:
 - From 3% to 13% of patients on active surveillance for prostate cancer opt out because of anxiety. These patients would rather pursue a "cure" with prostatectomy or radiation -- with risks of erectile disorder, urinary incontinence and bowel issues -- than live with the suspense and anxiety of being on AS.

What does the diagnosis mean in practical terms?

- Visits to the doctor
- Undergoing treatment--surgery, radiation, chemo, hormone
- Having genital area examined, treated
- Frequently being asked how he is feeling
- Disruption of work, possible financial distress
- Disruption of daily routine
- Being called a cancer patient
- Receiving sympathy
- Being the cause of concern or worry by loved ones
- Being unable to maintain normal sexual function
- Worry and embarrassment about incontinence



Depression:



Likely if you are:

- Feeling hopeless, worthless, guilty, angry
- Feeling bad about yourself, or that you are letting yourself or your family down
- Exceedingly anxious, ruminating frequently, feeling a loss of control
- Someone with a personal or family history of depression

- Feeling detached or estranged from others
- Worries about bodily integrity, like worrying that every pain or symptom is a sign that the disease has progressed.
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Anxiety
- Insomnia or sleeping too much



Symptoms of Anxiety

- Difficulty concentrating or mind going blank
- Irritability
- Gastrointestinal distress
- Headaches, chest pains
- Sleep disturbances
- Rumination
- Feelings of dread, exhaustion, weakness



What makes it so hard to get help?



The Function of Denial



Men and Self-Image



Strong

Tough

Hard

Intimidating

In Control

Respected

Athletic

Muscular

Powerful

Intimidating

Rugged

Scares people

Never show weakness

Breadwinner

Macho

Big

Answers to no one

Player

Rich

Highly sexual



Caregiver Distress

- Couples are good at divvying up emotional work
- Anxiety and depression impact not only the person with cancer, but also the caregiver.
- Studies find that caregivers and patients often experience equal psychological distress
- The same studies also found that when the person with cancer received treatment, caregivers experienced more distress than the patient.
- Helping family members manage their distress may have a beneficial effect on the distress level of the person with cancer.

Strategies for Caregivers

- Educate yourself
- Get support for yourself
- Approach your concerns with delicacy: plant the seed and back off if there is resistance
- Practice self-care
- Allow your loved one to grieve
- Be patient, but persistent



Treatment of Depression/Anxiety

Medication + Therapy = Best Treatment Option



Why not tough it out alone?

- Men with prostate cancer and depression have lower survival rates
- Depression is sneaky and can sneak out as anger, frustration, fatigue, withdrawal, addictive behaviors, somatic complaints
- Depression can lead to lack of adherence, missing medical appointments, not taking care of health
- “Sucking it up” and “toughing it out” can cause feelings to compound
- Worse overall quality of life
- Depression is a treatable, manageable problem. What do you have to lose by attending to something fixable?

Coping with Prostate Cancer at Every Stage

- Learn all you can, but don't obsess.
- Let go of “Why?” and “Why me?”
- Distinguish your illness from yourself
- Find your tribe:
 - Cancer Support Community
 - Imerman Angels
 - Us TOO
- Control what you can
- Become a self-care enthusiast
- Prioritize the present



A Personal Inventory

Take stock of your life

How is your Emotional Bank Account?

Fix what's broken or damaged

Clean house

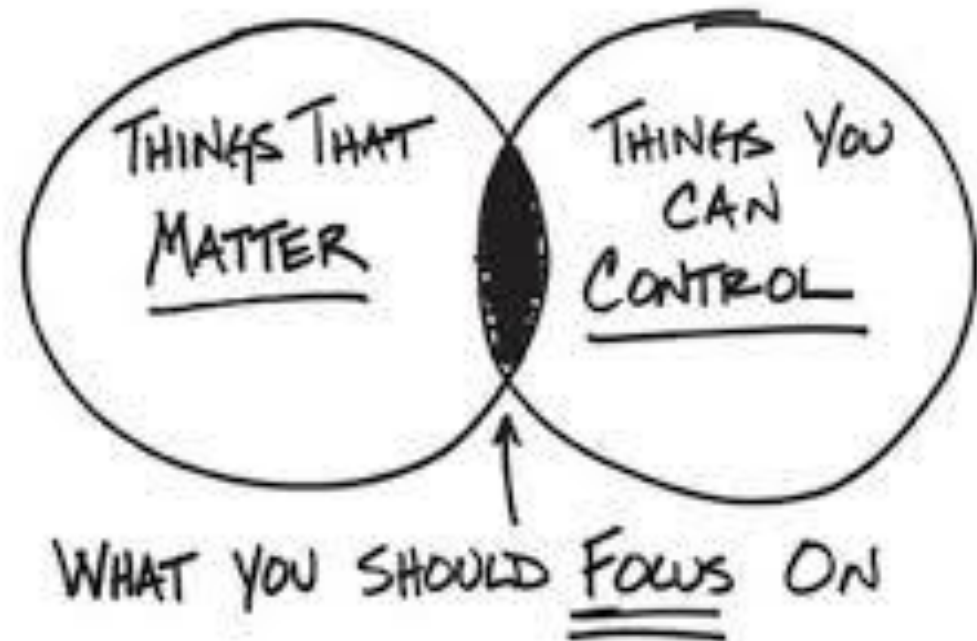
Make a bucket list

Choose your ATTITUDE

Talk about how you feel



Some Basic Strategies for Living Well



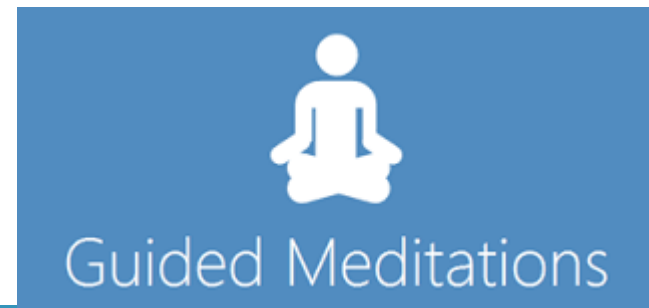
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Things that you can do:



Mindfulness





Faith, Optimism, Will and Hope in the Face of Cancer

- Patients with positive attitudes may be more likely to cope adaptively with disease-related problems.
- If positive thinking and faith have the potential promote peace of mind, reduce stress, relieve pain and anxiety, and strengthen the will to live, how can that be a bad thing?
- Positive thinking may strengthen adherence and motivate patients to do all they can to enhance their medical treatment.

- Many patients say that facing the uncertainties of living with an illness makes life more meaningful. The smallest pleasures are intensified and they tend to stop sweating the small stuff.



- Faith and prayer can lead to a sense of connection with a higher power and provide a sense of comfort and peace.
- Knowing that others are praying for a patient can help promote a sense of support and decrease feelings of being isolated and forgotten while going through treatment.

Is there a down side to
positive thinking?




NO, Not really....

There is little scientific evidence to suggest that anyone lives longer after a serious diagnosis because of their will to live, especially those in which lifestyle change does not necessarily have a positive impact on outcome.

What is known, however, is that quality of life can be greatly enhanced by faith, hope and optimism.

Coping with serious illness may not be a question of mind over matter, but mind does matter.

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That some good can be derived from every event is a better proposition than that everything happens for the best, which it assuredly does not.

~James K. Feibleman



Taking care of yourself and learning to cope positively with your illness will not necessarily make your life a non-stop parade of unicorns and rainbows, but it certainly will improve the quality of the life you are living today!

