

### advocacy CHATS The Psychosocial Impact of Cancer



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## Today's Chat Agenda

- Updates: Community Oncology Alliance (COA) and COA's Patient Advocacy Network (CPAN)
  - Registration Open: CPAN Virtual Advocacy Summit Wednesday, September 28, 2022
- Overview of CancerCare
- Understanding the emotional impact of a cancer diagnosis
  - Initial Diagnosis and Ongoing Challenges
- Patient and Caregiver Resources and Assistance

#### Learn more: COA's Patient Advocacy Network: <u>www.coaAdvocacy.org</u> Community Oncology Alliance: <u>www.communityoncology.org</u> Cancer*Care*: <u>www.cancercare.org</u>



#### 75 Years of Help and Hope

#### The Psychosocial Impact of Cancer on Families & Cancer*Care* Support Services

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### Initial Thoughts and Emotions

- Those who have been diagnosed with cancer may feel many mixed emotions
  - Fear, shock, denial, confusion, sadness
- Common thoughts could include:
  - Am I going to die?
  - Why me?
  - How did I get cancer? Did I cause it?
  - Who will care for my loved ones?
- May be unsure of how to tell family, friends, employers and colleagues
- Uncertain of next steps
- Question financial security in paying for cancer related treatments







### **Ongoing Impact of a Cancer Diagnosis**



- Change in physical appearance
- Change in demeanor and affect
- Change in movement and energy
- Experiencing symptoms of disease and side effects of treatment
- Insecurity and diminished self esteem



- Questioning ability of being able to fulfill job responsibilities
- Managing activities of daily living and adhering to treatment schedule and/or attending appointments
- Family and child care concerns
- Pressure of prior expectations
- Wanting to be "normal"
- Financial concerns

### **Families Affected by Cancer**

CANCERCOPE

- Stress of a cancer diagnosis impacts the family as a whole in various ways
- It is difficult to know how to navigate and adjust to changes that may occur
- The diagnosis can impact each family member differently, which could be dependent upon their role within the family unit
- A cancer diagnosis in the family can impact children's behavior, emotions and overall well being





Approaching the first conversation with children can be daunting. However, it may be beneficial to discuss a cancer diagnosis as soon as possible. Before speaking about the diagnosis, parents may consider the following:

- What they would like to share
- When and where the conversation will take place
- Who will be present during this conversation
- Setting the tone
- Asking professionals for guidance





## It is important to explain a cancer diagnosis in terms that children can best understand

- Using words that are common and familiar
- Focusing on providing accurate information and being honest
- Although challenging, utilizing the term "cancer"
- Everything does not need to be shared in one conversation

• Considering simple and concrete terms such as:

"Mom is sick with an illness called cancer. The cancer happened on its own – nobody did anything to make it happen. My doctors are doing the best they can to take care of me, and I am going to do everything possible to get better"



## When diagnosed, it will be unknown how long families will be managing cancer related concerns

- Even when treatment concludes, there are many adjustments that continue to occur the impact does not conclude when treatment does
- Openly communicate about the impact cancer continues to have on family members throughout this experience
- Being honest, even if the news is not always good, making sure children hear good or bad news directly from parents if possible – the source is very important





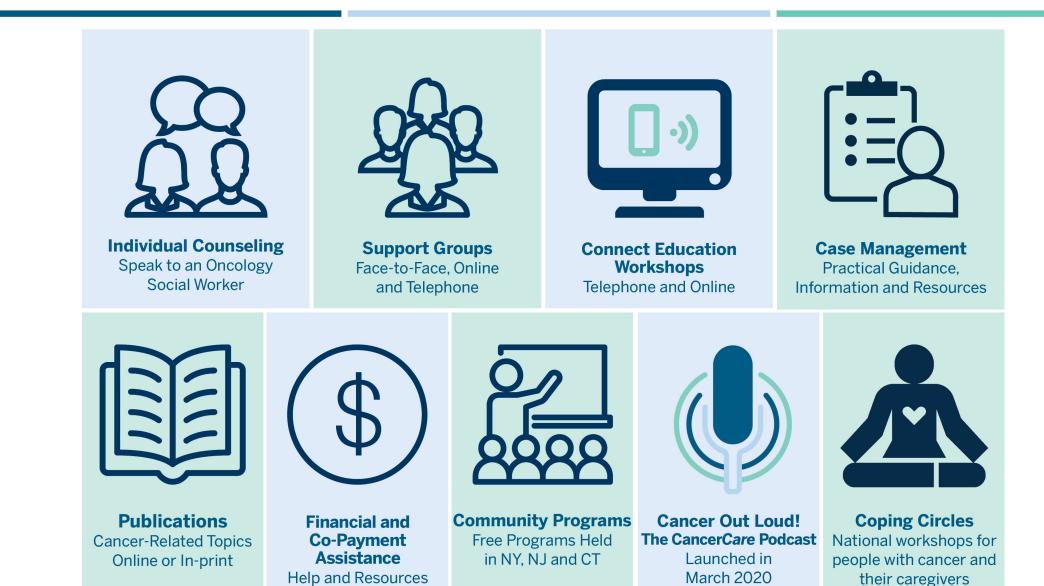
## A cancer diagnosis is overwhelming. Additional support for families can be helpful as they face new challenges together.

- Support services are available to those impacted by cancer, including children
- Encouraging children to express current feelings and concerns
- Being mindful of any emotional changes in children that might indicate they are stressed from worry
- Discussing outlets children can utilize when feeling upset or overwhelmed
- Allowing space for children to feel heard
- Modeling and explaining aspects of self-care
- Continuing to instill one's foundation as a family and approach challenges as a team



#### CancerCare Services







#### To speak with an oncology social worker, call our toll-free HOPEline: 800-813-HOPE (4673)

# You can also visit us online to learn more about Cancer*Care*'s programs and services: <u>www.cancercare.org</u>



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### Thank You to Lauren Chatalian & Our Listeners!

### Don't miss our Virtual Community Oncology

# Advocacy Summit – Wednesday, September 28, 2022



**Register Today** www.coaAdvocacy.org