Cancer Survivorship: The Impact on Mental Health

Today’s Chat Agenda

- Updates: Community Oncology Alliance (COA) and COA’s Patient Advocacy Network (CPAN)
  - COA Capitol Hill Day - June 2023,
    - Advocacy Focus: TACT Act: (Timely Access to Clinical Treatment) and PBM’s (Pharmacy Benefit Managers)
- Diane Simard, The Cancer Patient Experience and Mental Health Needs
- Creation of the Center for Oncology Psychology Excellence (COPE) at the University of Denver
- Advocacy Action Items
The Impact of Psychological Trauma on Survivors' Ability to Heal

Diane M. Simard
Stage IIIc Breast Cancer Survivor
Psycho-oncology Advocate
Author | Motivational Speaker
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Cancer’s Emotional Scars Deserve Compassionate Healing

FOUNDER

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
CENTER FOR ONCOLOGY PSYCHOLOGY EXCELLENCE

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What is Psycho-oncology?

A cancer specialty that addresses the variety of emotional, psychological, behavioral, and social issues that can accompany cancer.
There is no single right approach and no simple answer to dealing with the human side of cancer.

Jimmie C. Holland, M.D.
Psychological trauma can change an individual’s capacity to reason, sometimes savagely erasing the ability to cope.
The Impact of Psychological Trauma on Survivors’ Ability to Heal

Most Common Mental Health Symptoms:

• Distress
• Depression
• Anxiety
Distress Symptoms

• Sadness, fear, anger
• Helpless, hopeless
• Not in control
• Pulling away
• Worry

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Depression Symptoms

- Emotionally numb
- Nervous, shaky
- Moody
- Difficulty maintaining focus
- Thoughts of suicide
- Problems sleeping
Anxiety Symptoms

• Uncontrollable worry
• Muscle tension
• Trembling, shaking
• Restless, dry mouth
• Irritable, outbursts of anger
What About Fear of Cancer Recurrence (FCR)?

“As many as 2 in 3 survivors have FCR.”

2022 Study
European Journal of Oncology Nursing
Mental Health Tips

• Seek out a professional therapist
• Join a support group
• Write in a journal
• Increase your physical activity
• Schedule “worry sessions”
• Perform breathing exercises
• Explore art/music/theater/equine therapy
Call to Action

1. Learn about mental health for cancer survivors
   • apos-society.org/
   • nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health

2. Share your story about mental and cancer
   • Coping® magazine
   • Stand Up to Cancer
   • Cure® (curetoday.com)
Ideally, mental health support will continue to evolve and become a standard part of cancer care.
Thank You to Diane Simard & Our Listeners! Don’t miss our Advocacy Chat on Wednesday, July 12th at 12:00 pm ET