

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

■ Important information for you

The news of a cancer diagnosis is always shattering. Whether it is you yourself, those near to you or your wider circle, everyone needs to find their bearings to be able to move ahead despite the disease. It is natural to go through all kinds of strong emotions like sadness, anger or anxiety, but also hope and defiance. This emotional roller coaster with its highs and lows is exhausting. At the same time fresh doubts will often present themselves about your priorities in life. Throughout your medical treatment your care team will be ready to listen to you and to share your difficulties. They will also try to support those around you and inform them of the resources available in the support network. A psycho-oncologist or a psychiatrist can help you to face the situation. Don't hesitate to call on them.

Facing up to it

Our capacity to face up to things can be reinforced by morale-boosting activities; but also by an understanding of the treatment, its aims, what it entails and the nature of the different stages. Don't hesitate to ask questions about what worries you, so as to have all the relevant information to take the decisions that concern you.

Cultural differences

Cultural differences may create difficulties where your values or care priorities are concerned. You can ask for a transcultural consultation where someone of your culture is included, so as to give you support and to help your care team to understand you better.

Telling children

Children are alert to changes of mood in those around them. If they receive no explanation, they may interpret such changes in a negative way and may feel guilty of having done or thought something bad. Confronted with something unspoken, they are likely to lose their trust in adults. Expert child psychiatrists recommend that children be told the truth in simple terms and using non-scary examples. If you are afraid to tell your child about your illness or don't know how to go about it, a professional can guide and prepare you.



ALSO AVAILABLE

A programme to educate and support patients living with cancer is run several times a year. For information: www.avac.ch



ALSO AVAILABLE

The Ligue genevoise contre le cancer and other associations offer books, special activities and support for children whose parents are sick.

The chaplaincy of the HUG comprises representatives of all religious denominations, who are available for patients and their families and friends. Don't hesitate to call on them if this spiritual resource might be of help to you.

Some advice

- ▶ Organize your time and save your energy for moments of refreshment.
- ▶ Bear in mind that everyone reacts differently to uncertainty and to times of stress.
- ▶ Keep on talking with those near to you; tell them your views and listen to theirs.
- ▶ Watch out for 'black moods', difficulty sleeping or undue stress and talk about your concerns with your care team.
- ▶ If you feel overwhelmed by negative thoughts and have no pleasure in life, ask for an appointment with a psychologist or psychiatrist.

Other ways of dealing with the problem

Relaxation can help you to put up with the unpleasant effects of treatment. Getting involved in artistic activities (music, poetry, drawing or writing) or just communing with nature can enable you to rediscover your inner strength.

This card was translated by



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Ligue Suisse contre le cancer brochures, *Quand le cancer touche les parents* [When parents are affected by cancer], *Accompagner un proche atteint de cancer* [Being there for someone with cancer], *Cancer, quand l'espoir de guérir s'amenuise* [Cancer, as the hope of a cure fades] and the rehabilitation courses (1 x/year).



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