

Counselling

Coping with Cancer Through Counselling

Cancer may change many things in your life. You may be able to cope with some of them, while others may be too much for you to work through on your own.

Living with cancer can include feelings of fear, depression, and anxiety. Changes in physical appearance, finances, or a change in daily activities can leave you feeling discouraged, irritable, or anxious. Emotional distress is a very common experience for people living with cancer. You do not have to go through this on your own. Social workers are here to help.

Who Are Social Workers?

Social workers at the cancer centre are members of your health care team. Social workers are specially trained counsellors who help people deal with the physical effects and emotional distress that cancer can bring to a person and their family.

When Would it be Helpful to Talk to a Social Worker?

People often talk to a social worker when they are concerned about:

- Adjusting to cancer and treatment
- Adjusting to physical changes and body image
- Feelings of depression, anxiety and fear
- Relationship and family issues related to cancer
- Helping children cope with a family member's cancer
- Sexuality and intimacy
- Talking to family members and friends about their diagnosis
- Worried about side effects
- Grief and loss
- Issues related to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse
- Stress reduction
- Communication and information received from the health care team
- Arrangements needed for care at home or in an alternative living situation
- Caregiver stress
- Financial and employment issues
- Finding resources or supports in the community

You can ask any of your health care providers for more information and for a referral

Recommended Resources:

- **The Emotional Facts of Life with Cancer:** Visit the Patient and Family Resource Centre for a free copy of this booklet. It describes some of the unique needs of a person with cancer and how counselling can help.
- **The Truth of It:** This video series features interviews with Canadians diagnosed with cancer.
- **Virtual Hospice:** This site provides information and support on palliative and end-of-life care, loss and grief.