

ABC's for Life After Cancer

The following are some other ideas and suggestions that may help you live more fully:

Assess your life. Some survivors say their cancer gave them a wake-up call and a second chance to make life what they want it to be.

Be active. Getting out of the house and doing something can help you focus on other things besides cancer and the worries it brings. Even chair exercises or stretching can help.

Control what you can. Some people say that putting their lives in order helps. Being involved in your health care, making changes in your lifestyle and finding out about the services available to you can give you a greater sense of control.

Don't blame yourself for your cancer. Remember, cancer can happen to anyone.

Express your feelings of fear, anger or sadness. You don't have to be upbeat all the time. People have found that when they express strong feelings such as anger or sadness, they're more able to let go of them.

Find a creative outlet. Even people who have never danced, painted or drawn before have found it helpful and fun to do something new and creative.

Help yourself relax. Spending time on any activities that make you feel calm may help you lower stress. Or try mind-body methods such as meditation, hypnosis, yoga or imagery.

Join a Support Group. Sharing experiences about living with cancer can help people air their concerns, solve problems and find meaning in what they've been through. Some research shows joining a support group improves quality of life and enhances survival.

Keep a journal. Write down your thoughts about what gives meaning to your life now.

Look for the positive . Try to use your energy to focus on wellness and what you can do now to stay as healthy as possible. While no one can control every thought, some survivors say they try not to dwell on the fearful ones.

Seek spiritual support. A trusted clergy member or professional counselor may be able to help you with life questions.

Try to find humor in life. Laughter can help you relax. When you laugh, your brain releases chemicals that produce pleasure and relax your muscles. Even a smile can fight off stressful thoughts.