

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

When It's More than Just Stress

We often associate post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with wars, natural disasters, and other life-threatening events. But post-traumatic stress (PTS), a less severe form, can occur when one faces cancer. PTS can also occur at any time during or after treatment, from cancer diagnosis onward, and it can also strike parents of childhood cancer survivors.

Cancer diagnosis can cause normal stress reactions like having repeated frightening thoughts, being distracted or overexcited, having trouble sleeping, and feeling detached from

oneself or reality. PTS symptoms are more pronounced and can include feeling defensive, irritable, or fearful; being unable to think clearly; experiencing more sleeping problems; avoiding other people; and losing interest in life. PTS symptoms can be triggered by smells, sounds, and sights that one had experienced during cancer treatment, even long after treatment has ended. And if left unaddressed, PTS can worsen into PTSD.

You can help protect yourself against PTS by getting good social support, learning about

your stage of cancer, and having good communication with your healthcare providers. If you experience PTS, crisis interventions similar to those for PTSD can

reduce stress. These include relaxation training, support groups, and (if symptoms are severe) medication. Talk to your doctor if you think you are experiencing PTS.



Stress Busters

You can manage stress during cancer treatment by:

- Exercising
- Spending time outside
- Socializing with family or friends
- Eating a healthy diet
- Getting enough sleep
- Joining a support group
- Having daily relaxation time
- Doing things you enjoy
- Writing in a journal

The Healing Power of Mindfulness

RBOI will hold a 5-week introductory course in mindfulness.

Free to those facing cancer, cancer survivors, and loved ones. Classes will meet at 2020 SE 17th Street in Ocala from 2-3:30 p.m. on Thursdays beginning February 13 and registration is required. Call Amy Roberts at 352-732-0277.

The American Society of Clinical Oncology recommends the following for reducing stress:

- Avoid scheduling conflicts and give yourself enough space between appointments.
- Be aware of your limits and don't feel guilty about saying "No."
- Ask family friends, and coworkers for help with tasks.
- Prioritize your tasks and do the ones most important to you if you cannot do them all.
- Break your tasks down into smaller steps that are easier to handle.
- Concentrate on what you can control.
- Get help with financial problems by talking to an oncology social worker or a financial adviser.

BY THE NUMBERS

20 and 3

Writing in a journal for as little as 20 minutes a month for 3 months can benefit physical and emotional health.

47%

Adults who say they listen to music to manage stress (American Psychological Association 2019 Stress in America survey)

Nearly 18 million

Adults (and 927,000 children) who have practiced meditation (2012 National Health Interview Survey)

30 minutes

Moderate walking per day shown to reduce stress

Look Good Feel Better

RBOI has partnered with the Look Good Feel Better program, which offers free workshops to women undergoing cancer treatment. Trained and certified beauty professionals give lessons on skin and nail care, cosmetics, wigs and turbans, and accessories and styling. The lessons help bring some normality back to a life disrupted by cancer.

RBOI will hold workshops in our offices in The Villages on February 10 and in TimberRidge on February 17. Both workshops meet from 2 to 4 p.m. and registration is required. Visit www.lookgoodfeelbetter.org and look for the Program Finder. Call Wendy Hall at 352-527-0106 or Amy Roberts at 352-732-0277 with any questions.



A Higher Standard

Patient-centered radiation oncology close to home

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