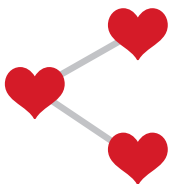


5 Steps to Take Care of Your Emotional and Spiritual Needs



TAKE TIME TO PROCESS YOUR FEELINGS

- Feelings of hopelessness, a sense of abandonment, fear of the unknown and anger towards others and the universe are common. Take time to acknowledge your feelings and how metastatic breast cancer (MBC) has affected your sense of identity, purpose and meaning.
- Before having a conversation with your healthcare team, recognize the feelings you're experiencing and acknowledge what's important to you. Ask yourself the following questions and write down your reactions:
 - What am I most worried about?
 - What am I hoping for?
 - What is most important to me right now?
 - What do I believe?
- Make an appointment with yourself once a week to delve more deeply into the emotions you are experiencing. Consider writing your feelings down in a journal during this time. This will help you take a bit of control over what's going on in your life, and decide if life might be easier if you were working with a counselor or therapist.



FIND YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK

- If spirituality and prayer are important to you, you may find comfort in talking to members of your spiritual community or the hospital chaplain.
- Your healthcare provider can likely recommend a few local or online support groups for people who are also living with MBC. You could consider joining an online forum, such as [Inspire's Advanced Breast Cancer](#) forum, or check out the "[Guide to Online and In person MBC Support](#)" on MBCN.org for recommendations.
- You may make new friends who have MBC and are going through similar experiences as you. In many instances, this group becomes an entirely new support group. Visit the "[Finding Your MBC Support Group](#)" page to view a list of organizations that provide peer-to-peer support.
- If you've thought about it, and think life might be easier with more support, then talk to your doctor or navigator about counselors or organizations that may be available.

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FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

- Ask yourself, what are 3 things I enjoyed prior to my diagnosis and how can I incorporate them into my life now? And if you cannot do the things you used to do, what are 3 things you can do that are enjoyable to you now, today?
- Focus your energy on setting attainable goals and completing daily routines you enjoy, like walking your dog or meeting up with friends once per month.



PRACTICE HAVING TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

- Women with MBC sometimes deal with anticipatory grief — or the feeling of impending loss — and those emotions can be especially strong if you have dependents and are worried about leaving them.
- Talk to your doctor or counselor about when and how to share your diagnosis with your family (especially if you have young children in your family).
- Practice having these tough conversations so you feel more comfortable with what to say and how best to address any questions in an age-appropriate manner. Visit the [“Sharing the News with Friends and Family”](#) discussion guide to help think through these tough conversations.



BE HONEST ABOUT WHAT YOU NEED AND WHAT YOU DON'T NEED

- Similar to preparing for difficult discussions, practice how you would like to respond to questions from family and friends on how they can help support you emotionally. Tell them how they can show support by setting up a time to do a fun activity together or how humorous cards are always appreciated.
- Rather than responding to individual questions about your health and treatment, you may want to consider putting that information on a blog or Facebook. This will help keep family and friends up to date on your health, and could help you have conversations with them about other topics.
- Don't be afraid to ask for alone time. You need time to be by yourself.
- Be open with your treatment team about your emotions and personal goals. They are there to help you, and may offer insights on ways to help.