

Metastatic Breast Cancer: Living with Uncertainty

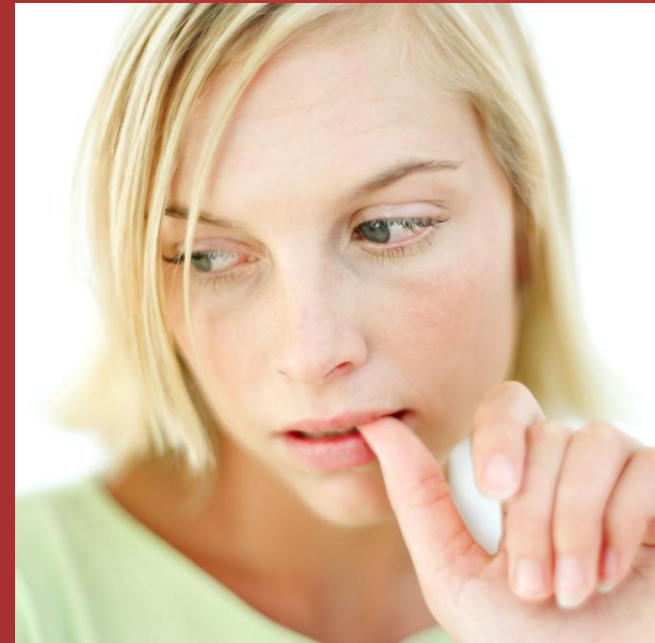
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Worry, Fear, Anxiety

- Normal human emotions
- Emergency response system
- Pushes us to take action



Philosophy for Well-Being

- Putting the illness in its place
- Managing/controlling the worry
- Take control where we can
- Accepting that some of it is beyond our control

How do you do that?

- Self-care
 - Nutrition
 - Exercise
 - Medical follow ups
 - Social relationships
 - Family relationships
 - Faith/religion/spirituality
 - Work life

How do you do that?

- Planning for the future
- Be ready to be flexible



Putting the illness in its place

- Compartmentalizing
- Cancer does not define who you are
- Move it to the side, live alongside it

Worry triggers

- What are your worry triggers?
- Know what they are, and have a plan
- Having a plan or strategy is a worry-buster
 - Having to think on our feet is worrisome to many
 - Have a “script” that you use, especially for acquaintances

Exercise: Yeah, it's worth it!!!

- Stress management
- Decreases cortisol
- Exercise/rest schedule
- Improves sleep
- Improves overall sense of well being



What warms your heart?

- Best stress management strategy
- Spend time there
- Ask for what you want
- Accept help



Coping when it really gets tough

- When treatment or diagnostic picture changes:
 - Stop.....Breathe
 - Time to digest new information
 - Get factual information
 - Enormous capacity to adapt to our circumstances

What are the blessings?

- Any positives since diagnosis?
- Shift in perspective?
- Changes in close relationships?
- Greater understanding of what is most important?

Future planning

- Decreases anxiety/worry
- Make your wishes known
- Will
- Medical power of attorney
- Living will
- Funeral plans?



What happens when anxiety/uncertainty gets the better of you?

- Accept it: What we resist persists
- Fear surfing
- Forgive yourself

Inspiration

- Find what inspires you: prayer, photo, quote, mantra:
- Cancer is not for sissies
Suzanne Somers



Inspiration

- “Courage is not always a roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, “I will try again tomorrow.”
– Mary Anne Radmacher

