

Addressing Patient Mental Health Concerns & Provider Compassion Fatigue In Cancer Care



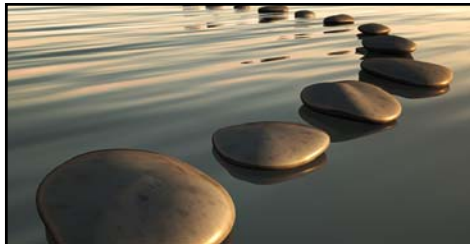
Fostering Wellness & Post-traumatic Growth



Learning Objectives & Competencies

- Goals for this evening:

- Learn about the components of integrated wellness and common trauma reactions when living with cancer
- Learn to assess trauma reactions and safety concerns in clients with cancer
- Learn to recognize the signs of compassion fatigue in their own clinical practice and implement a reflective wellness approach
- Learn about community resources to help support your patients in addressing mental health



OVERALL WELLNESS & CANCER'S EFFECTS ON WHOLE HEALTH

What happens to wellness after a diagnosis?



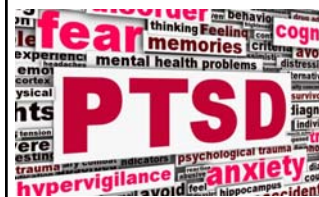
“Life gets flipped upside down and turned inside out.”

Fennel's Phases of Chronic Illness

- Phase 1: Crisis
- Phase 2: Stabilization
- Phase 3: Resolution
- Phase 4: Integration
- Fluid movement through phases



Common Reactions To Being Diagnosed Across Different Phases of Chronic Illness



- Disbelief/denial
- Avoidance
- Intrusive processes & reliving experiences
- Hypervigilance

In an analysis combining patients who had both full and subsyndromal PTSD, there was a 21.7% incidence of PTSD at the 6-month follow-up assessment, with rates dropping to 6.1% at the 4-year follow-up assessment. Patients with breast cancer (compared with those who had other types of cancer) were 3.68 times less likely to develop PTSD at 6-months, but not at 4-years follow-up (Chan et al., 2017).



Phase One: Crisis

- Initial diagnosis
- Start of treatment
 - Chemo
 - Radiation
 - Surgery
- Transition into new stages
- Loss of support
- Demoralization
 - Identity, meaning, & purpose
 - Before and after cancer



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Phase 2 - Stabilization

- Expectations not realized
 - Treatment
 - Changes in stages of cancer
- Adjustments to change in nature of support
 - Starting treatment
- Beginning to recognize loss and changes as result of cancer
- Questioning
 - Meaning, purpose, identity



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Phase 3 - Resolution

- Acceptance of new life
 - Still experience existential crisis and despair
- Reflection
 - On new identity
 - On purpose
 - On meaning
 - On support
- Treatment may not be completed



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Phase 4 - Integration

- Reengagement with life outside of treatment
 - Building/reconnecting supports
- Solidifying new identity and meaning
- Person does not need to be done with treatment or in remission to enter phase



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Movement through Phases is Fluid



**TRIAGING MENTAL HEALTH:
ASSESSMENT & MEDICAL NECESSITY**

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Normative Stress vs. Pathological Stress in Cancer Care

- Normative Reaction
 - Trauma
 - Sadness & loss of purpose
 - “Scanxiety”/worry, fear of future
 - Social substance use
 - Loneliness/isolation
 - Anticipatory loss
- Pathological Reaction
 - Compounded trauma
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Substance Use
 - Grief/loss



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Protective Factors to Developing Mental Health Concerns in Cancer



- People who receive strong support from family & friends
- People who are given accurate info about stage of the cancer
- People who have good relationships with members of their healthcare team
- People who have ancillary support from community

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Risk Factors for Mental Health Concerns in Cancer Clients

- Childhood cancer survivors
 - Longer, more intensive treatment periods
- Previous diagnosis of PTSD or other MI
- Women from minority groups
- People with high levels of overall distress
- People who use avoidance strategies (drugs, alcohol, etc.)
- People with less formal education
- People with low or no income
- Single people



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Medical Necessity & Safety

- What is the person's stress reaction like?
 - Questions to help assess the stress and mental health concerns:
 - How are you coping with the stress and who do you talk to about your concerns?
 - Do you have anyone to talk to about your diagnosis, treatment, or stress beyond your oncologist and nurses?
 - What is your perception of your mental health compared to others?



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INTERVENTIONS

How to begin fostering wellbeing when client is in a tornado of stress

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Using Interventions to Foster Posttraumatic Growth



- Posttraumatic Growth (PTG)
 - Process of remoralization
 - Instilling seeds of hope as tools to help rebuild & fix “home”



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- More stability early on leads to more room for growth
 - Not dealing with constant crisis



- Reduce Anxiety (exercise, meditation, mindfulness or mind body practices, talk with supportive friends)
- Reflect on personal experience (Journaling or expressive activity such as music or art)
- Restore a sense of safety (talk with a mental health provider, chaplain, or spiritual advisor)
- Connect with others (join a support group)
- Encourage a post-diagnosis life vision (What brings meaning/purpose/fulfillment?)



Tools to identify burnout in your own practice

- Anxiety
- Exhaustion
- Resentment
- Withdrawing from friends & family
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Emotional numbness
- Negative outlook
- Loss of hope
- Feeling unsafe
- Experiencing self-loathing
- Intense rage or bouts of crying
- Nightmares
- Despair



*Vicarious trauma occurs on a persistent and pervasive basis



What is on
your self-care
wheel?



If patient or yourself struggles to build wellbeing or manage stress...

- Think community-based resources!
- Referrals
 - Evidenced-based treatments for mental health
 - Identify your healthcare system referral process
 - Clinical & psychological services
 - MHS for increased severity of mental health concerns along with a cancer diagnosis
 - Community-based therapeutic support
 - Gilda's Club Twin Cities for free community-based psychosocial support (support groups, healthy lifestyle, education, social opportunities, information & referral)

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Mental Health Systems, P.C.



- More significant needs
 - Pathological reactions to stress
- For patients:
 - Thrive for Psychological Wellbeing in Cancer
 - Individual Therapy Services to build resiliency and stress management in individual with cancer
 - Takes an integrated care and team approach to treatment
 - Many other group and individual therapy services
- For providers:
 - Healthcare Providers DBT Skills Group
 - Designed to offer support and coping skills to healthcare providers experiencing high stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue

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Gilda's Club Twin Cities



What we do:

Gilda's Club is a cancer community that provides comprehensive social and emotional support for anyone as an essential complement to medical care.

Who we serve

- Men, women, teens and kids—the person living with cancer, caregivers and their family, friends and co-workers too.

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Five Part Program of Support

Nationally Acclaimed, Comprehensive, Evidence-Based



- Support
- Education
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Social Opportunities
- Information & Referral

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Additional Local Resources

- Angel Foundation (financial support)
- Pathways, A Healing Place (integrative health)
- Cancer Legal Care
- Brighter Days Grief Center
- Firefly Sisterhood (1:1 peer mentoring - breast cancer)
- Walk-in Counseling Center (mental health)
- Canvas Health (crisis connection)
- Cancer Support Community (online resources and support)
- Many others!



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In Conclusion...

- What is the person's stress reaction like?
 - Questions to help assess the stress and mental health concerns:
 - How are you coping with the stress and who do you talk to about your concerns?
 - Do you have anyone to talk to about your diagnosis, treatment, or stress beyond your medical care team?
 - What is your perception of your mental health compared to others?



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Questions to Reflect

1. What are common signs of a trauma reaction?
2. What signs of demoralization do you recognize in someone living with cancer?
3. What are Fennel's Stages of Chronic Illness?
4. How have you seen wellness being affected by trauma, a cancer diagnosis, and cancer treatment?
5. How do you view the mind-body connection when assisting those with cancer?
6. What are some ways you can utilize metaphor as a vehicle for shifting perspective to foster resiliency?
7. What are some methods/avenues for identifying one's language around care and its' effects on your client?
8. What are some experiential tools you can utilize to help foster posttraumatic growth and resiliency?
9. What are signs and symptoms of vicarious trauma/compassion fatigue that you might find in yourself?
10. What are various techniques/methods that you can utilize to build and implement a self-care plan to combat vicarious trauma?



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