



PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF PROSTATE CANCER

DORIANNE EAVES, PSYD

MEN TO MEN PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

FEBRUARY 24TH, 2022

AGENDA

- Psychosocial Oncology
- Grief
- Depression - management & coping
- Anxiety - management & coping
- Pain & Mindfulness
- “Finding Peace”
- Discussion Q&A

WHAT IS PSYCHOSOCIAL ONCOLOGY?

- “Psychosocial oncology is a cancer specialty that addresses the variety of **psychological, behavioral, emotional and social issues** that arise for cancer patients and their loved ones. Cancer can cause significant distress for patients and their families. The type of distress varies based on each individual and family experience... There are two psychological dimensions of cancer. The first is the emotional response patients and families have to cancer. The second are the emotional, behavioral, and psychosocial difficulties that influence living with cancer.”

(APOS, 2020)

WHAT IS PSYCHOSOCIAL ONCOLOGY?

A growing area of oncology that focuses on the psychological, social, and emotional impact of cancer on patients and caregivers, and on health behavior

- Addresses psychological issues affecting patient and caregiver quality of life
- Empowers patients to take a positive and active role in their cancer care
- Helps patients and families adjust to a difficult disease and its processes

WHY IS PSYCHOSOCIAL ONCOLOGY IMPORTANT?

Emotional and psychological support during cancer diagnosis and treatment may:

- Significantly improve quality of life
- Increase your ability to manage your treatment
- Reduce related stress and anxiety
- Foster a greater sense of control
- Help keep you informed about what you are likely to experience

GRIEF

- Cancer is a grief process
 - Response to loss
 - Transition
 - Diagnosis, physical changes
 - Functioning, sexual health, intimacy
 - No checklist
 - Not linear
 - Can be delayed
 - Lonely/isolating



DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY IN PROSTATE CANCER

CancerCare and USToo survey on depression and anxiety in men with prostate cancer (approx. 500 respondents):

- 78% said they had experienced symptoms that are hallmarks of depression and anxiety.
- 88% acknowledge that they experienced symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Only 36% very confident they could accurately identify symptoms of depression.
- 41% had support from health care professionals to help manage symptoms

DEPRESSION MANAGEMENT & COPING

Symptoms

- Depressed/low mood
- Diminished interest in activities
- Change in weight/appetite
- Sleep disturbance
- Fatigue, low energy
- Feelings of worthlessness, guilt
- Difficulties concentrating
- Recurrent thoughts of death, suicidal thoughts

Management/Coping

- Maintaining/finding a routine
- Pleasurable activities
- Coping skills
 - Past stressful experiences
- New activities
 - Trial & error
- Social support

<i>Characteristics of Grief</i>	<i>Characteristics of Depression</i>
Patients experience somatic distress, loss of usual patterns of behavior, agitation, sleep and appetite disturbances, decreased concentration, social withdrawal	Patients experience similar symptoms, plus hopelessness, helplessness, worthlessness, guilt, and suicidal thoughts
Grief is associated with disease progression	Depression has an increased prevalence (up to 77%) in patients with advanced disease; pain is a major risk factor
Patients retain the capacity for pleasure	Patients enjoy nothing
Grief comes in waves	Depression is constant
Patients express passive wishes for death to come quickly	Patients express intense and persistent suicidal thoughts
Patients are able to look forward to the future	Patients have no sense of a positive future

ANXIETY MANAGEMENT & COPING

Symptoms

- Feeling anxious, on edge
- Not being able to stop or control worrying
- Worrying too much about different things
- Trouble relaxing
- Restlessness
- Becoming easily annoyed or irritable
- Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen

Management/Coping

- Grounding techniques
- Relaxation strategies
 - Guided imagery, deep breathing, PMR
- Thoughts
 - Helpful vs. unhelpful
- Control vs. cannot control
- Scheduled “worry time”
- Stress management
 - Distraction vs. avoidance

BODY IMAGE, SEXUAL HEALTH, & INTIMACY

Body Image Concerns

- Concerns about body image may appear before changes occur
 - Worries about hair loss, treatment side effects
 - Worries about post-surgical/treatment changes
- Associated with depression, avoidance, withdrawal
- Fears about body image changing may impact treatment decisions
- Concerns about sexual functioning
 - Hesitation in bringing this up with providers

Management

- Communicating thoughts, fears, and preferences to your provider
- Gathering information about what to expect
- Setting realistic expectations
- Communicate with medical providers
 - Treatments
 - Urology, Oncology, Psychology
- Keeping open communication with friends and family
- Intimacy building

PAIN MANAGEMENT & COPING

Pain & Pain-Related Difficulties

- An unpleasant **sensory and emotional** experience associated with, or resembling that associated with, actual or potential tissue damage
- A personal experience that is influenced by biological, psychological, and social factors
- Characterized as Acute, Chronic, or Breakthrough
- Managing and treating pain is a key element of cancer treatment

Management/Coping

- Daily Pain Diary
 - Take note of changes in your symptoms
- Relaxation strategies
 - PMR, Guided Imagery
- Mindfulness and Meditation
- Distraction
- Exercise
- Communication with Providers
- Best approach is a flexible approach

COMMUNICATING ABOUT CANCER

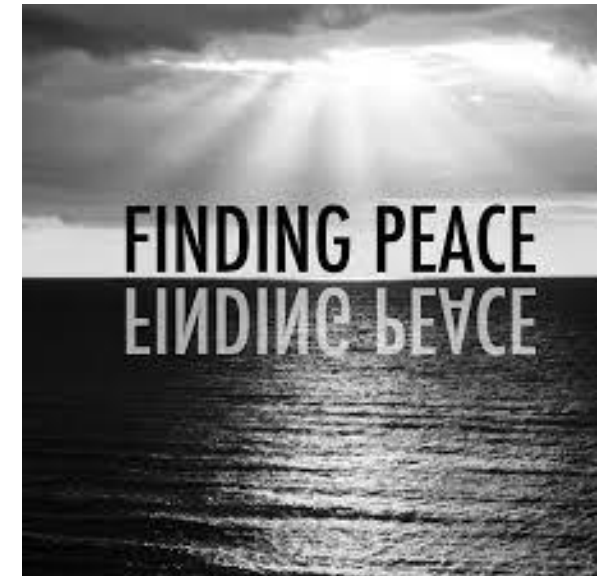
- Maintain openness with your providers about new symptoms/emotional experiences/life changes to ensure the best care possible
- Maintain openness with your partner regarding symptoms, treatment, and expectations for functioning and roles during treatment
- Increase comfort discussing sexuality and intimacy-related concerns.
- Discuss cancer diagnoses with children (both young children and adult children)

GENERAL COPING STRATEGIES

- Awareness of the types of stress-reducing methods that work best, such as exercise, meditation, or spending time with friends
- Importance of maintaining a regular schedule, including sleeping, eating, and scheduling activities during the day to remain busy.
- Engaging in pleasurable activities/things you usually enjoy.
- Schedule time to be social with friends and family.
- Identify those who will listen, help or offer comfort, and give those who offer help specific tasks.
- Tell your doctor about your concerns.
- Reach out to others--don't try to do everything alone.
- Assess for depression, anxiety and physical pain and get treatment.
- Find a counselor, social worker, psychotherapist or psychiatrist as needed (your doctor may refer you).
- Share your feelings with your spouse, partner, family- - become a team, if possible.
- Join a support group, either face-to-face and/or online.

“FINDING PEACE”

- Feel “stuck”?
- Acceptance
 - Acceptance is not approval
 - “Willingness”
 - Values, barriers
- Perspective, priorities
- Reflecting on daily gratitude
- Spirituality



RELAXATION EXERCISE



DISCUSSION

- Questions?

