

Reducing Barriers to Pain and Fatigue Management

Signs of depression continued:

- Feeling of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Thought of death or suicide
- Inability to cope with pain or fatigue
- Questioning your faith or religion

Signs of anxiety include:

- Feelings of panic, loss of control
- Anger or irritation
- Increased muscle tension
- Trembling and shaking
- Sweaty palms, racing pulse, difficulty breathing

What You Can Do

- Talk with your doctor or nurse about these feelings or emotions and possible ways to treat them
- Seek help through counseling (pastoral care, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists) or support groups
- Use prayer or other types of spiritual support
- If possible, identify the situations that may be adding to your anxiety
- Try deep breathing exercises to help relieve anxiety
- Keep a personal journal to help you express yourself

Contact Your Doctor or Nurse if the Following Occur:

- You have thoughts of suicide
- You cannot eat or sleep for several days
- You are having trouble breathing and you feel shaky
- Nothing you do seems to help

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Coping with Emotional & Social Impact of Pain & Fatigue

Cancer symptoms such as pain and fatigue can affect your emotional, social, and spiritual well being.

Distress is a term used to describe unpleasant feelings or emotions that may interfere with your ability to cope with cancer. It is **normal** to be distressed when you receive a diagnosis of cancer.

Distress covers a wide range of feelings, including:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Panic
- Fear
- Stress

Distress can occur at different times. Times that patients often find most stressful include:

- Hearing the initial diagnosis of cancer
- Waiting for the first treatment to begin
- Dealing with side effects of treatment
- Completing cancer treatment and facing an uncertain future
- Follow-up visits with doctors
- Hearing news of recurrent or advanced illness
- Facing advanced stages of cancer

Distress can sometimes become more serious. Certain signs of **depression** include:

- Persistent sad or “empty mood almost daily
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Disrupted sleep or oversleeping
- Decreased energy almost every day



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