

# Promoting Wellness: Psychosocial Support to the Cancer Patients and Survivors

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## Opinion Article

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## DESCRIPTION

Receiving a cancer diagnosis is a life-altering event that not only impacts physical health but also profoundly affects emotional well-being and quality of life. Psychosocial support, encompassing emotional, social, and psychological interventions, plays a crucial role in helping cancer patients and survivors navigate the complex challenges they face. By addressing the emotional and social aspects of the cancer journey, psychosocial support programs contribute significantly to comprehensive patient care and promote resilience during and after treatment. A cancer diagnosis can evoke a range of emotions-from fear and anxiety to sadness and uncertainty. Patients often experience profound psychological distress as they grapple with the shock of diagnosis, concerns about treatment outcomes, and the impact of cancer on their daily lives and relationships. Similarly, cancer survivors may face ongoing emotional challenges, including fear of recurrence, coping with treatment side effects, and adjusting to changes in body image and identity.

Psychosocial support aims to alleviate these distressing emotions and enhance coping mechanisms, developing a sense of empowerment and emotional well-being throughout the cancer journey. It acknowledges that cancer care extends beyond medical treatments to encompass the holistic needs of patients and survivors.

### Psychosocial support for cancer patients and survivors

**Counseling and therapy:** Professional counselors, psychologists, or social workers provide emotional support and help patients navigate the emotional complexities of cancer. Therapy sessions may focus on coping strategies, stress management, and improving communication with healthcare providers and loved ones.

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**Support groups:** Peer support groups bring together individuals facing similar challenges, providing a safe space to share experiences, exchange information, and offer mutual encouragement. These groups can be particularly beneficial for reducing feelings of isolation and developing a sense of community among participants.

**Educational workshops:** Workshops on topics such as nutrition, exercise, mindfulness, and symptom management empower patients with practical knowledge to enhance their overall well-being during and after cancer treatment.

**Survivorship programs:** Dedicated survivorship programs focus on the unique needs of cancer survivors, offering long-term support, monitoring for late effects of treatment, and promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors.

**Integrative therapies:** Complementary therapies such as yoga, meditation, art therapy, and music therapy complement conventional medical treatments by promoting relaxation, reducing stress, and improving overall quality of life.

### Positive impact of psychosocial support on cancer patients and survivors:

**Improved emotional well-being:** Psychosocial interventions help reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and distress, enhancing overall emotional well-being and quality of life.

**Enhanced coping skills:** Patients learn effective coping strategies to manage stress, uncertainty, and treatment-related challenges, empowering them to actively participate in their care.

**Supportive relationships:** Support groups and counseling sessions foster supportive relationships with healthcare providers, family members, and peers, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness.

**Better treatment adherence:** Patients who receive psychosocial support are more likely to adhere to treatment plans, leading to improved treatment outcomes and reduced hospitalizations.

**Post-treatment adjustment:** Survivorship programs assist cancer survivors in transitioning from active treatment to post-treatment life, addressing physical, emotional, and practical concerns.

### Benefits of psychosocial support

**Accessibility:** Many patients face barriers such as geographic distance, financial constraints, and limited availability of support services, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

**Stigma:** Cultural beliefs, misconceptions about mental health, and stigma associated with seeking psychological support can deter patients from accessing needed services.

**Integration into care:** Integration of psychosocial support into standard cancer care pathways varies widely across healthcare settings, highlighting the need for comprehensive, patient-centered approaches.

### Psychosocial support for cancer patients and survivors

**Policy initiatives:** Governments and healthcare organizations should prioritize funding for psychosocial support services, ensuring equitable access for all patients regardless of socioeconomic status or geographic location.

**Education and awareness:** Public education campaigns can raise awareness about the importance of psychosocial support and reduce stigma associated with seeking mental health care.

**Collaborative care models:** Multidisciplinary teams, including oncologists, nurses, psychologists, and social workers, should collaborate to integrate psychosocial support into comprehensive cancer care plans.

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**Research and evaluation:** Continued research is needed to assess the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions, identify best practices, and tailor support services to meet diverse cultural and individual needs.

Psychosocial support is not merely a complementary aspect of cancer care but an essential component that enhances quality of life, promotes strength, and improves treatment outcomes for patients and survivors. By addressing the emotional, social, and psychological dimensions of cancer, healthcare providers can empower individuals to navigate their cancer journey with strength and dignity. Advocating for comprehensive psychosocial care ensures that all individuals affected by cancer receive the support they need to thrive beyond diagnosis and treatment.