

The Emotional Stages of Cancer:

Finding Your Voice



...here are the progression of emotions you can expect to experience, and some suggestions on how to process and work through this emotional time.



DENIAL



ANGER



NEGOTIATION



DEPRESSION



ACCEPTANCE

(Sources: <https://www.lbhc.org/recently-diagnosed/your-emotional-concerns/emotional-stages-cancer-diagnosis>
<https://www.curetoday.com/view/immunotherapy-options-around-the-bend>)



Words of Wisdom:

“Trauma creates change you don’t choose. Healing is about creating change you do choose.”
-Unknown



Dealing with Denial:

- Why does denial occur?
 - Suppression of difficult emotions
 - Feelings of threatened safety and security
- When it helps:
 - Avoids emotional spin out
 - Allows for slower emotional processing
- When it harms:
 - Prevents actions
 - Can cause further harm due to inaction

(Source: Mayo Clinic)



How I Deal with Denial





Addressing Feelings of Anger:

Anger can look like:

- Fear
- Frustration
- Panic
- Anxiety
- Stress
- What are the underlying feelings of this anger?

It's ok to not be ok. Talk to friends and family, and build that support network. Don't be afraid to ask your medical team to help processing this emotion.

(Source: Cancer.gov)

How I Work Through Anger

How I Navigate Negotiation



Navigating through Negotiation:

- This stage may create challenges in asking for help, sharing your story, and communication with your support network.
- You may experience thoughts on changing something about yourself, your lifestyle, etc. in order to make things better.
- Could have, would have, should have, are common thoughts that might come up.
- Moving through this is about being realistic and honest about what actually happened, and what do you actually have control of?

(Source: American Cancer Society)



Challenges with Depression:

- Depression often is the arrival at the understanding that life has vastly changed.
- Feelings can show up as withdrawal & hopelessness.
- Explore opportunities for support. Find a counselor to share you feelings and emotions with. Practice mindfulness and breathing exercises.

(Source: psychnet.com)

How I Challenge my Depression

What Acceptance Means to Me



Arriving at Acceptance:

- Emotions have started to stabilize.
- Beginning to adjust to your new reality.
- You won't feel good all the time. Acceptance can still have emotional times, know that it's normal.



Finding Your Voice: Speaking your Truth:

Understanding, and then being able to speak about your personal truth takes time. Ready to start working toward understanding your truth? Consider thinking through the prompts below.



What to Expect:

- It won't be easy
- It's going to be vulnerable
- Your truth may differ from others' truth
- It can be seen as disruptive
- You may need the support of others

(Source: <https://www.mindbodygreen.com/articles/how-to-find-and-speak-your-truth>)



Working Towards Identifying Your Truth:

- What do you value about yourself and others?
- What are your needs?
- How can you express yourself while remaining positive?
- How might my truth be criticized or complimented?
- How can I come from a place to empathy?

Take Action:

Who do you want to share your "truth" with?

In what ways can sharing your truth benefit your and others?

What is your first action step to speaking to others about your story?

“ One thing is more frightening than speaking your truth and that is not speaking.
- Audre Lorde ”

This tip sheet is being provided to you, compliments of Tigerlily Foundation to help you and your patients during this challenging time. Thank you for the care and support you continue to provide for your patients.

