

HOW WELL ARE YOU COPING?

A CHECKLIST FOR CANCER PATIENTS



Everyone has a different way of coping with the feelings that come with having cancer. These checklists can help you learn whether your approach to coping is healthy and helpful. It may also reveal strengths you can build on and areas where you can improve.

HEALTHY COPING

The statements below are linked to healthy coping. Which are true for you?

- I try to learn more when problems come up or I get bad news.
- I talk with others and share my concerns when I face a problem.
- I try to see the humor when things get tough.
- On some days, I just try not to think about my illness.
- I keep busy to avoid always thinking about being sick.
- I choose to look at bad news as a temporary setback in my recovery.
- If good information shows I need a change in treatment, I do it as soon as possible.
- Cancer is one small part of me; it does not define me.
- Cancer has made me think about my life and the people and activities I enjoy the most.

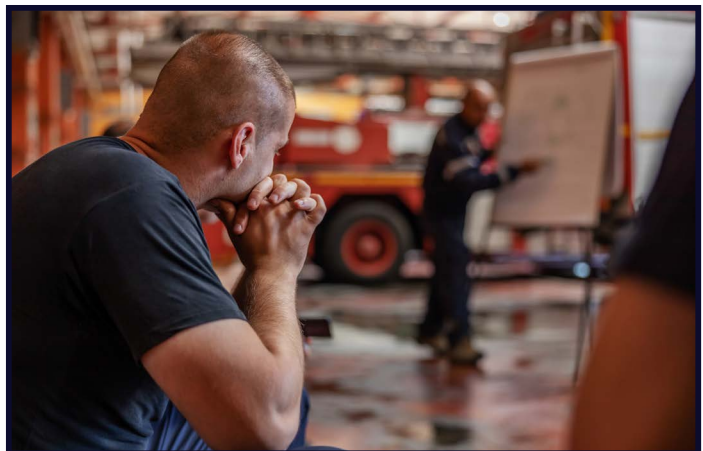
The more of the above statements you can use, the better you will be able to deal with the challenges of cancer.

UNHEALTHY COPING

The list below includes common coping techniques some people might engage in to help them face cancer. But these approaches to coping don't usually help the coping process. They can even drive people away from you just when you need them. If any of these statements are true for you more often than not, it may be time to look for help with coping.

- When I'm upset, alcohol helps me calm down.
- I wish people would leave me alone.
- No matter what I do, I can't sleep.
- I am just unlucky, and my cancer is proof of that.
- I can't help thinking I must have done something bad to deserve this.
- Having cancer is bad enough. To make matters worse, no one knows how to take care of me.
- I think cancer is my fate. What's the point of trying to fight it?

If you have painful feelings such as anger, hopelessness, sadness, emptiness, or worry for more than two weeks, you should find ways to [manage your distress](#). [Anxiety](#) or [depression](#) can also happen in people with cancer and can be managed by the right steps. Keep in mind that emotional problems can and should be treated, just like physical problems.



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IF YOU NEED SUPPORT

The [ACS Cancer Survivors Network](#) is a way to share how you are coping, get support, and find real-world answers to questions about cancer, treatment, and relationships.

For more information and support, call the ACS Cancer Helpline toll-free number, (800) 227-2345. We're here when you need us.

To connect with another fire fighter who is a cancer survivor, visit the Firefighter Cancer Support Network at firefightercancersupport.org or call (866) 994-FCSN in the U.S. or (438) 600-FCSN in Canada.