

# **Script – Print – Wrestling With Your Emotions**

## **A Cancer Diagnosis Creates a Variety of Feelings**

When it comes to cancer, most people think about physical pain that is often associated with a diagnosis. But the emotional toll that comes with this serious disease can many times be just as devastating.

Those feelings can range from fear to denial, anger, sadness and more. And the wave of emotions tends to change hourly, daily and even minute to minute. A cancer diagnosis now becomes all-consuming for both the patient and perhaps loved ones as well.

“With the initial cancer diagnosis immediately comes shock,” says Jill Deno, oncology nurse navigator for OSF HealthCare. “Patients grieve the loss of the normal, of your expected, your routine and almost immediately after a cancer diagnosis all of your normal is replaced with labs, scans, biopsy appointments, and your life suddenly revolves around cancer.”

One of the biggest hurdles for anyone diagnosed with cancer to deal with is feeling overwhelmed by the news. It’s not abnormal to worry about your future, the disruption cancer will cause in your life, the feelings of helplessness, financial concerns as well as the impact that your health issues will have on those close to you.

“I think as cancer patients we find it really difficult to talk about our feelings and emotions with our families,” says Deno. “We find that we want to be strong to protect them and be brave to protect them. Our families want to do anything and everything they can to protect us and, unfortunately, they can’t fix cancer or take cancer away.”

Deno, who is also a cancer survivor, encourages patients to find ways to cope with their emotions. For example, build a support group of people you feel comfortable talking to; find ways to relax such as meditation, guided imagery and exercise; and choose when and how you want to talk about your cancer.

“The new normal is going to be different,” says Deno. “It might be better than your previous normal, but it’s okay to grieve those losses and then moving on to finding hope and encouragement from your family, your community, your caregivers, and finally, just victory or settling into, “this is how I will live the rest of my life with this diagnosis. There’s a lot of emotions that you experience when going through a cancer diagnosis, treatment and even into survivorship.”

If you find that you’re still struggling emotionally with your diagnosis, it might be time to seek help. Start by speaking to your doctor or someone you can confide in.

“We don’t want to just treat your cancer, we want to treat all of you,” says Deno. “If you feel it’s too hard and getting too heavy to carry, ask your treatment team for support. There might be support groups, medications, different tricks and tips, and even just talking with someone on

your support team might be enough. But no one needs to carry that burden alone, and if it's too heavy to carry, than it's time to get help.”

For more information on cancer care, including treatments, patient education and support services, click [here](#).