



Your MENTAL HEALTH

A cancer diagnosis is difficult to cope with for everyone involved—the person who is receiving the news, the caregiver and other family members. Feelings of anxiety and depression are common. It's important to recognize when it is time to seek help.

Keeping your mental health in check

Caring for your loved one may be a responsibility you will fulfil for months or years. Over time, the emotional toll can feel overwhelming and tiring. Keeping your state of mind in check will go a long way to help your mental wellbeing so you don't feel discouraged.

Mental stressors to watch for:

- Carrying the emotional burden for everyone
- Feeling guilty or ashamed about the idea of asking for help
- Giving it everything you have because it is a short-term situation
- Neglecting your needs because your loved one is suffering
- Being in a constant state of worry



When is it time to seek professional help?

Recognizing signs of anxiety and depression early on can prevent more serious problems later. If feelings of anxiety and depression start to interfere with daily activities for you, other family members, or your loved one, it may be time to receive individual counselling from a medical professional.

Signs of depression to watch for:

- Ongoing sadness or feelings of hopelessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in most activities
- Major weight loss or weight gain as well as other changes in appearance that are not connected to treatment
- Agitation or restlessness
- Fatigue or no energy
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping excessively
- Trouble focusing, remembering, or making decisions
- Feeling worthless, guilty or helpless
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Support for caregivers

Caregiving can be a lonely experience. You may not feel that you should be seeking support for yourself. But to be able to care for a loved one, it is very important that you take really good care of yourself, too. Refer to the fact sheet ***Caring for yourself*** for ideas on taking care of your needs as a caregiver and a guide to creating a self-care plan. There are also ways to reach out to other caregivers who are in similar situations or have recently been through similar experiences.

The **First Connection** peer support program is a telephone support program that links you with a trained peer volunteer who has experienced a similar situation. Anyone with a blood-related cancer, as well as his or her caregiver, is eligible to receive a call.

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada offers a number of helpful resources. For more information about any of our services, visit bloodcancers.ca or ask to speak with your local Community Services Manager at 1-833-222-4884.



LEUKEMIA &
LYMPHOMA
SOCIETY
OF CANADA*

Never hesitate to contact us, we're here to help!

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