



introduction



DAVID EMERSON
Director PeopleBeatingCancer
Multiple Myeloma Survivor
MM Cancer Coach

A diagnosis of an incurable cancer is hard both on one's mind and one's body. Each stage of cancer care can be demanding both physically and mentally. Conventional oncology limits its therapies to the body. **My experience as a long-term myeloma survivor is that the mind needs therapies along with the body's therapies.**

Below are the therapies that I have researched and practice myself that I have found to support my mind as I live with an incurable blood cancer.

attitude as mind-body therapy

1) TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR HEALTH.

I don't mean to sound trite here. **You make all decisions about your body.** Your doctor and others can make recommendations but you are the final say. There was a fundamental shift in my thinking when I decided that my oncologist was no longer in charge of my cancer, in the fall of 1997.

2) FIND A SENSE OF PURPOSE.

There has got to more of a goal for you than remission or even a cure. It can be seeing your daughter/son graduate/marry, it can be achieving a goal within an organization, it can be most anything. **But your "sense of purpose" must be more than your health.** For me it is PeopleBeatingCancer. Researching and writing about cancer, coaching cancer patients, survivors and caregivers, all of it is extremely gratifying for me.

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2168592/

3) UNDERSTAND AND LIVE POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY.

This is not about being cheerful or thinking happy thoughts. The field of Positive Psychology described by Dr. Martin Seligman in the video linked below brought a fundamental shift in how I thought about the ups and downs that come with cancer (explanatory style).

www.ted.com/talks/martin_seligman_on_the_state_of_psychology#t-121904

4) GROW SPIRITUALLY.

Please notice that I didn't say to become spiritual or "you need some churchin' up" (Blues Brothers-Cab Calloway). I said to "grow spiritually." **The simple experience of facing death will help you grow spiritually.**

www.peoplebeatingcancer.org/spirituality-and-religion-for-cancer-patients-survivors-and-caregivers/

5) BE PROUD TO BE A CANCER SURVIVOR.

The two cancer philosophies that I disagree with most often are "Cancer as war or She beat cancer to the end..." and "I don't want people to define me by my cancer..." I feel the exact opposite. **I look at cancer as a chess match, as if I need to out-think cancer, not beat it.** Further, I'm proud of my scars, both mental and physical. I no longer sweat the little stuff. I'm more spiritual. I give more. Has cancer made me a better person?

www.peoplebeatingcancer.org/12146/

practice mind-body therapy in your daily life



6) MODERATE DAILY EXERCISE

In many ways, moderate daily exercise is the ultimate mind-body therapy. Before, during and after active therapies, countless studies prove that moderate exercise changes how your genes express themselves, help you loose weight, help you sleep (see #8), just feel better...

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2885882/>

7) BE SOCIAL.

Whether in a marriage or a committed relationship, **cancer survivors live longer if you and your primary caregiver are partners.**

www.peoplebeatingcancer.org/mind-body-therapy-for-cancer-marriage/

8) GET QUALITY SLEEP.

Is sleep a physical or a mental therapy? **Some the most commonsense therapies can be the most effective for cancer patients and survivors.** A good night's sleep for instance. The articles linked below cite that sleep is difficult during therapy and lack of restful sleep may worsen your cancer...

www.peoplebeatingcancer.org/sleep-as-cancer-therapy-learn-how-to-get-quality-over-quantity/

9) PRACTICE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES.

Breathing exercises, mindfulness, meditation, massage, aromatherapy, sauna- I consider all of these as being relaxation therapies...

www.cancercare.org/publications/54-relaxation_techniques_and_mind_body_practices_how_they_can_help_you_cope_with_cancer

10) RECEIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY.

It took me a few years to figure it out but **talking to someone about my cancer experiences helped me a lot.** I still have "a bit of the OCD" and I think there may be a little PTSD still drifting around my head but talking to a professional psychologist was important therapy for me.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychotherapy

11) MIND-BODY SUPPLEMENTATION:

Curcumin Shows Promise as Depression Treatment

"Chronic inflammation can decrease levels of serotonin and dopamine and lead to degeneration in certain brain areas. It is possible that the antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects of curcumin can restore these neurotransmitters and protect the brain, eventually leading to improvements in mood..."

<http://www.psychiatryadvisor.com/mood-disorders/curcumin-depression-treatment/article/4595011>

Natural Mood Foods: the actions of polyphenols against psychiatric and cognitive disorders

"Abundant in green tea, EGCG is a natural catechin polyphenol that has been utilized in China as medicine for at least 4000 years. Now available in botanical supplement form, EGCG is most renowned for its high antioxidant activity and its ability to alleviate symptoms of stress and depression."

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3355196/>

Omega-3 Fatty Acids and Mood Disorders

"Deficits in omega-3 fatty acids have been identified as a contributing factor to mood disorders and offer a potential rational treatment approach."

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16741195>

Effects of Exercise on Anxiety, Depression and Mood

"The meta-analyses of correlational and experimental studies reveal positive effects of exercise, in healthy people and in clinical populations (also in patients with emotional disorders) regardless of gender and age. The benefits are significant especially in subjects with an elevated level of anxiety and depression because of more room for possible change..."

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15518309>