



Managing anxiety with Multiple Myeloma

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Introduction

Anxiety with multiple myeloma is common

National Cancer Institute states that almost half of people living with cancer experience significant distress and anxiety

This can change over time as we live with our diagnosis

Causes of anxiety and stress

- Fear of the unknown


- first for many. Something we never heard of
- What is treatment? Will it work? So many questions

Fear of Treatment

- What are the meds? How do they affect people? How will they affect me?
- Other treatments What are they? Stem Cell Transplant? Chemo? Radiation >
- How will I feel?

Financial Concerns





Anxiety after initial treatments

Did they work?

What are my monthly lab results?

What do these numbers mean?

Each day is different what does this mean?

Energy one day, exhausted the next

How do I act for my family and friends



“You Look Good”

- + What does this bring up when people say this?
- + We have an invisible cancer
- + We may look great on the outside because what is happening is on the inside



Ways to help cope with this anxiety

- + Understand Multiple Myeloma
 - + Ask questions of oncologist
 - + Write down any questions
 - + Read read read
 - + Access HealthTree excellent information

Keep a notebook diary

Be careful of media sites- might contain misinformation



Manage symptoms



Track symptoms



Bring to doctor appointments



Discuss efficient treatments with your doctor. This helps you to be a partner in your care. Helps gain a sense of control



Keep up to date on treatment options- HealthTree is excellent for this.

Ways to Cope with the anxiety

- + Talk openly about your feelings
 - + Find someone who will listen, support group, coach
- + Take care of yourself
 - + Eat healthy, exercise, even a little, drink plenty of water
 - + Do things you love, reading, painting, watching favorite TV shows
- + Get spiritual support
 - + Means different things to everyone.
 - + Find what works for you
- + Medications for anxiety
 - + If necessary, No harm in taking meds to help lower your stress
- + Find people who understand your journey
 - + Support group, coach
- + Find a therapist – there are those that specifically work with those of us with cancer



Things we can do to help our anxiety

+ Meditation

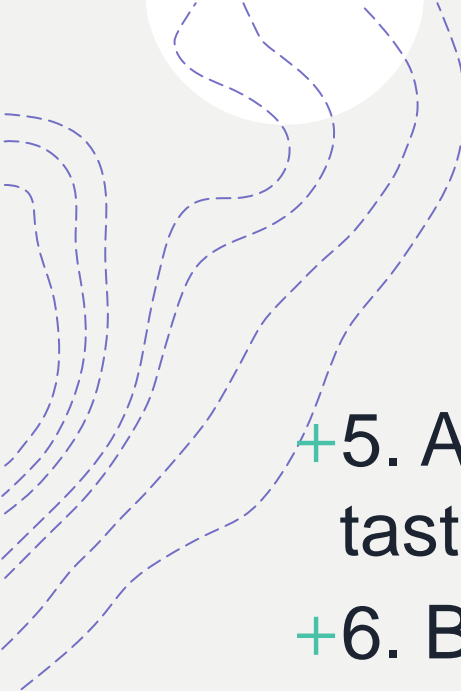
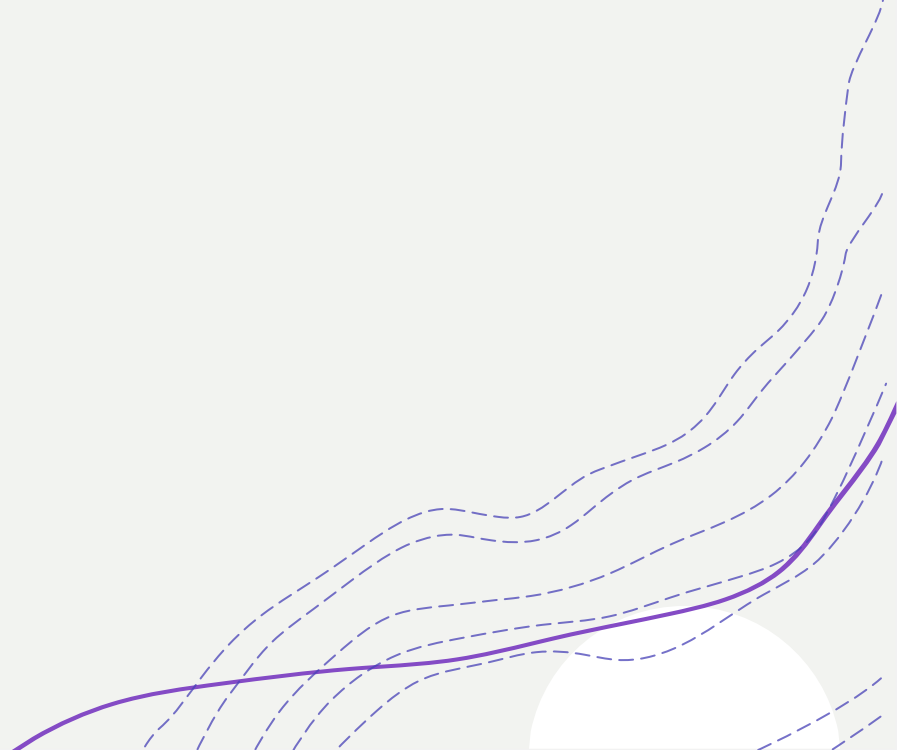
- + All kinds available
- + Some of us meditate daily
- + Mindfulness meditation
- + Walking meditation
- + Transcendental meditation



Some easy ways to bring some calm to our lives

- + Eating meditation
- + Practice= Conscious- eating meditation
 - + 1. Do this in private
 - + 2. choose a food, (eg cheese sandwich)
 - + 3. Sit down in front of food, take several deep breaths, note the food, color, shape texture. Really look at it. Notice what you are feeling
 - + 4. Slowly reach and pick it up, act with intention try to focus on the movements of reaching and picking up.



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- +5. As you take your first bite, focus, how does it feel? Smell taste.
 - +6. Be aware of chewing and swallowing. Focus on awareness of the entire process.

Mindfulness of Pain or Discomfort

- + Most of us when we have pain or discomfort we tighten up as an attempt to fight it
- + An alternative way is to “Soften” around it
- + Example
 - + Sit in a chair, lie in bed wherever you wish
 - + Take several deep breaths
 - + Agree that you will sit for a short time – 5 minutes
 - + As you identify something uncomfortable, an itch, muscle pull , slight headache, etc
 - + Focus on it, relax the muscle, focus on itch, etc
 - + When time up begin to move slowly and stretch and breathe



I Am Grateful

- + We all have something to be grateful for even in our worst times
- + Process at end of day
- + 1. Recall three things you are grateful for.
 - + Even the smallest thing-
- + 2. Keep a journal
 - + write a few sentences nightly
 - + When you look back and read them it is encouraging



Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- + 1. Take a deep breath
- + 2. Curl both fists, tighten biceps and forearms Hold it then relax
- + 3. Roll your head around on your neck, clockwise then counter clockwise Then reverse it. Now relax
- + 4. Arch your shoulders back as you take a deep breath, push out your stomach. Hold, Relax
- + 5. Straighten your legs, curl your toes back toward your face, tighten your shins Hold Relax.
- + 6. Tighten your calves, thighs buttocks, Hold relax
- + 7. breathe



For more information

+ Healthline <https://www.healthline.com/health/meditation-online>

+ Apps

+ Calm

+ Headspace

+ Breath: Sleep and Meditation

References

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- + Seaward, B., (2018). *Managing stress: principles and strategies for health and well-being.* 9th Ed. Jones & Bartlett: MA.