



**National Behavioral
Health Network**

for Tobacco & Cancer Control

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
MENTAL WELLBEING

Let's Talk – Colorectal Cancer and Mental Wellbeing

March 24, 2022 | 12:00 – 1:00 pm ET

Welcome!



Tamanna Patel, MPH
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Housekeeping



This webinar is being recorded. All participants are placed in “listen-only” mode.



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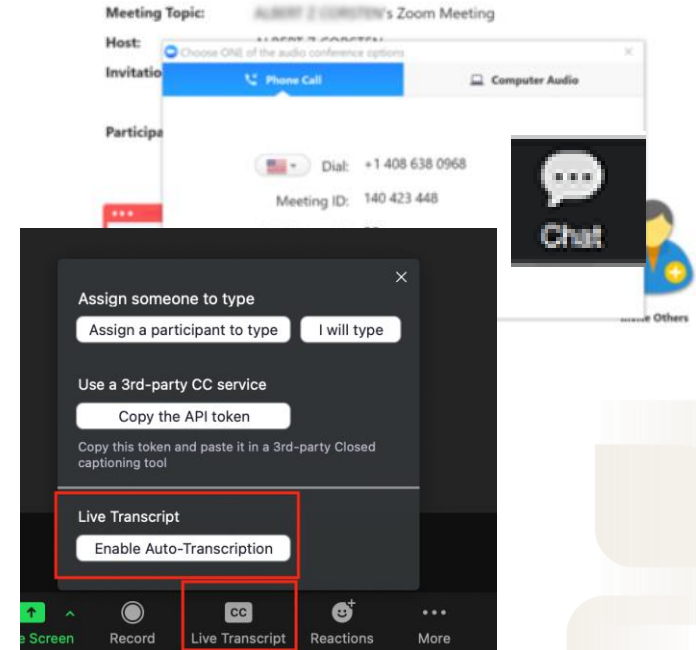
Submit questions by typing them into the chat box or using the Q&A panel.



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Slide handouts and recording will be posted here: <https://www.bhthechange.org/resources/lets-talk-colorectal-cancer-and-mental-wellbeing/>



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National Behavioral Health Network for Tobacco & Cancer Control

- Jointly funded by CDC's *Office on Smoking & Health & Division of Cancer Prevention & Control*
- Provides resources and tools to help organizations reduce tobacco use and cancer among individuals experiencing mental health and substance use challenged
- 1 of 8 CDC National Networks to eliminate cancer and tobacco disparities in priority populations



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FIGHT *COLORECTAL CANCER*[™]

Relentless Champions of Hope in the Fight Against Colorectal Cancer.

Resources

Visit our Resource Library at FightCRC.org/Resources.

Advocate

Stay up to date on all of the opportunities to get involved and see what we can accomplish together at FightCRC.org/Advocacy.

Research

Learn how Fight CRC informs and influences the community to commit more resources to colorectal cancer research at FightCRC.org/Research.



Awareness

Help us raise awareness in March, Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, at FightCRC.org/Awareness.

Share Your Story

Share your lived experience at FightCRC.org/ShareYourStory.

Ways to Give

Donate money or time, knowing that your generosity is most appreciated and that we love every dollar and make the most of every minute of your time, at FightCRC.org/Ways-To-Give.

Today's Featured Speaker



Erin Baurle, PsyD

Licensed Clinical Psychologist
Associate Professor, Medical Oncology
Colorado University Cancer Center



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Let's Talk – Colorectal Cancer and Mental Wellbeing

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Licensed Clinical Psychologist
Associate Professor, Medical Oncology
Colorado University Cancer Center

Business

- Asking questions
- Recording

Learning Objectives

- Discuss importance of colorectal cancer screening and barriers to screening faced by individuals with mental health and substance use challenges
- Gain tips for discussing cancer risk and promoting screening for individuals with mental health and substance use challenges
- Discuss the mental health impact of a colorectal cancer diagnosis
- Learn how to manage mental health challenges during cancer treatment and survivorship

What Is Colorectal Cancer Screening?

- Looks for cancer or pre-cancer
- Polyps can take 10-15 years to turn cancerous
- Highly effective at preventing or finding cancer early
- We are seeing the benefits!
 - Lowered death rate
- Colorectal cancer continues to be leading cause of cancer death for men and women in US

Screening Tests

Stool based

- Several test options that you do at home
 - FIT test
 - Lightly place card into water, seal and return
- Less sensitive, and recommended to be done more often
 - Often annually

Physical Exam

- Colonoscopy
 - Every 10 years
- Virtual colonoscopy by CT
- Other options involving physical examination
- As more intensive, can be done less often

When to Start?

- People with “average risk” should start screening at age 45
 - Important to have regular check-ups with primary care provider who will recommend appropriate test and frequency for you
- In later age (75+) may screen less frequently or stop
- Those with strong family history or other GI risk factors may start screening earlier
- Any concerns or GI changes should be discussed with a healthcare provider

Risk Factors for Colorectal Cancer

Those that can be changed:

- Overweight or obese
- Sedentary lifestyle
- High consumption of red meats and/or processed meats
- Low Vitamin D
- Smoking
- Alcohol
 - 2 or less/day for men
 - 1 or less/day for women

Those that cannot:

- Age
 - Higher risk 50+
- History of certain GI conditions
- Family history colorectal cancer & genetic syndromes
- African Americans
- Ashkenazi Jews
- Type II diabetes

from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer.html>.

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Colorectal Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment

- Further tests after positive screening
 - Scans, biopsy
- Cancer will be staged
- Surgery usually first route
- Chemotherapy and/or radiation afterwards
- Immunotherapy
- Colostomy & ileostomy

Audience Question

How many cancer screenings is it estimated were missed between March and June 2020 in the U.S. as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- a) 2 million
- b) 200,000
- c) 22 million
- d) 20,000

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/cancer/cancer-trends-how-has-the-covid-19-pandemic-affected-cancer-screening/>

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Barriers to Screening & Treatment

In general

- COVID-19 and impact on accessing care
- Not knowing screening should be done or how to access it
- Stigma of talking about “bathroom issues”
- Fears of invasiveness of test or if something is found

With mental health challenges

- Poor access to mental health care
 - Makes overall wellness more challenging
- Medical care often not integrated with mental health care
- Feeling stigmatized in healthcare settings
- Practical concerns
 - Scheduling, transportation, insurance coverage

Promoting Screening and Well Being

- Ensure you ask about medical health as part of mental health treatment
- Coordinate with medical team involved in individual's care
- Identify and discuss barriers to medical care
- The controllable risk factors are also evidence-based ways to improve mental health!
 - Regular exercise
 - Limited alcohol consumption
 - Reduced or no smoking
 - Healthful, nourishing diet
- Stay connected with cancer organizations and promote materials as part of your clinical practice
 - Sending an e-blast for colorectal cancer awareness month with links

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Cancer and Mental Health

- Mental health challenges common after cancer diagnosis
 - 1 in 3 experience distress
 - Symptoms of depression and anxiety common
 - May have symptoms of PTSD
 - Increased risk of suicide
- Worsens disparities
 - Individuals with mental health challenges 30% more likely to die from cancer
- Challenges associated with cancer treatment can worsen pre-existing mental health challenges
- Improved management of mental health challenges = better cancer outcomes

Mental Health Impact of Colorectal Cancer Treatment

Newly Diagnosed

- Confusing and overwhelming time
- Focused on finding treatment path
- Common challenges:
 - Telling others
 - Often others don't know what to say
 - Don't yet have answers
 - Navigating new systems and language
 - Assuming “sick” role in addition to other roles

Mental Health Impact of Colorectal Cancer Treatment

In Treatment

- Patients often experience less distress during this time
- Follow common routine, feel like progress is being made
- Distress if treatment plan changes
- Feel physically poor
- Adjusting to significant physical changes
- Caregivers and families more impacted during this time

Mental Health Impact of Colorectal Cancer

- Post-Treatment
 - Support network returns to “normal life”
 - Patient often dealing with emotional impacts for first time
 - Challenges integrating experience with returning to pre-cancer life
 - Coming to terms with permanent physical changes
 - Fears of recurrence
 - “scanxiety”
- Advanced Cancer and Recurrence
 - Unique psychological needs based on patient’s situation
 - Often existential questions and meaning making

Tips for Managing Emotions in Cancer Treatment

- Stress Reduction
 - Great for everyone at any time
 - Mindfulness and meditation
 - Headspace, Calm, search other apps in app store
 - Make it a regular part of each day
- Help with managing side effects and feeling as physically well as possible
 - Sleep hygiene
 - CBT-I Coach
 - Pain management during treatment
 - Track symptoms and emotions

Tips for Managing Emotions in Cancer Treatment

- Interpersonal Communication and Boundaries
 - Help patient or caregiver develop a “script”
 - Pick one person who will provide updates
 - Redirect people to that person or website
 - Websites like Caring Bridge
- Communicating with Medical Team
 - Bring someone to appointments, or call in
 - Have one place to write questions
 - Don't Google (or know your limits)

Audience Question

What are some positive impacts of a journaling practice for cancer survivors shown in scientific literature?

- a) Improved memory
- b) Better management of emotions
- c) Improved relationships
- d) All of the above

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<https://www.mdanderson.org/cancerwise/3-benefits-of-journaling-for-cancer-patients-and-caregivers.h00-159379578.html>

Tips for Managing Emotions in Cancer Treatment

- Personal Growth
 - Journaling, therapy, support groups to process change
 - Adjustment to “new normal”
 - Changing identity and relationships
- Build Support Network
 - Support groups
 - Counseling
 - CBT
 - Meaning-centered
 - ACT
 - Mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR)

Thank you!

References

- American Cancer Society. “Colorectal Cancer Risk Factors.” <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer.html>. Accessed February 28, 2022.
- Clifton, A., Burgess, C., Clement, S. *et al.* Influences on uptake of cancer screening in mental health service users: a qualitative study. *BMC Health Serv Res* **16**, 257 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-016-1505-4>.
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Questions?

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