



National Behavioral Health Network

for Tobacco & Cancer Control

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

Survivor and Thriver Resources for Individuals Affected by Cancer

A resource digest

Cancer is a highly prevalent disease that 40% of the U.S. population is at risk of developing in their lifetime (American Cancer Society, 2023). Due to its complex properties and ability to mutate, cancer can be difficult to treat and can drastically alter an individual's day-to-day life while receiving medical care. Approximately one-third of individuals with cancer are affected by psychiatric disorders, making their cancer journey even more distressing (Caruso & Breitbart, 2020). A cancer diagnosis not only affects the individual living with cancer but impacts the lives of their caregivers and support systems, as well. In addition to higher prevalence of serious mental illness, feelings of depression and anxiety commonly occur among individuals and family members managing a cancer diagnosis, but they can be controlled with the right resources and treatment plans.

When an individual enters the remission stage, the signs and symptoms of their cancer are reduced (partial) or undetectable (complete). Even though a person in complete remission is not considered to be living with cancer anymore, the disease still can have lasting effects on that person's wellbeing. "Thriver" is an all-encompassing term that honors the experience of an individual with lived cancer experience and encourages them to reclaim their lives, grow from the experience and embrace their new normal. Cancer thrivers/survivors and their loved ones often live with the fear of the disease returning and, in some cases, may experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (American Society of Clinical Oncology, 2022). Even if a cancer treatment plan ends when a patient enters remission, cancer thrivers/survivors and their caregivers should continue to take steps to protect their mental wellbeing. Support groups, counseling and medication are a few examples of how cancer thrivers/survivors and their family members can improve their overall wellbeing.



The following resources can support individuals with lived cancer experience and their caregivers as they continue their cancer thriving journeys:

Mental wellbeing

- [Managing Mental Health After a Cancer Diagnosis](#)
- [Wellness Guide for Cancer Survivors \(English\)](#)
- [Wellness Guide for Cancer Survivors \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Practice Mindfulness and Relaxation](#)
- [Pets, Support and Service Animals for People with Cancer](#)
- [Emotional, Mental Health, and Mood Changes](#)
- [The Trauma of Cancer: Caring for the Mind and Body](#)
- [Cancer Journey Resource Guide](#)

Support groups

- [Cancer Survivors Network \(American Cancer Society\)](#)
- [Caring Bridge](#)
- [First Descents](#)
- [Send It Foundation](#)
- [Cancer Hope Network](#)
- [Advocacy and Support Groups \(National Comprehensive Cancer Network\)](#)

Resources for caregivers

- [Caregiver Resource Guide \(American Cancer Society\)](#)
- [Support for Caregivers of Cancer Patients \(National Cancer Institute \[NCI\]\)](#)
- [Caregiving After Cancer Treatment Ends \(NCI\)](#)
- [Support for Families: Childhood Cancer \(NCI\)](#)
- [Support for Teens When a Family Member Has Cancer \(NCI\)](#)
- [When Someone You Love Is Being Treated for Cancer: Support for Caregivers \(NCI\)](#)

Priority populations

- [Young Adult Survivors United](#)
- [Facing Heredity Cancer Empowered \(FORCE\)](#)
- [Escape \(LGBTQIA+ Community\)](#)
- [Su Familia: National Hispanic Family Health Helpline](#)
- [Health Care Disparities and Cancer](#)
- [Coping With Cancer for Black, Indigenous and People of Color](#)
- [The Impact of Cancer on Diverse Communities in California](#)
- [Supporting Cancer Patients and Survivors Through the Medicaid Unwinding/Redetermination Process](#)
- [Cancer in American Indians and Alaskan Natives in the United States](#)





Research articles

- [Epidemiology of mental health programs among patients with cancer during COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Systematic review and meta-analysis of collaborative care interventions for depression in patients with cancer](#)
- [Recommendations for the implementation of distress screening programs in cancer centers](#)
- [Association between chronic physical conditions and the effectiveness of collaborative care for depression](#)
- [Posttraumatic stress disorder after cancer diagnosis in adults: A meta-analysis](#)
- [Beyond the fear that lingers: The interaction between fear of cancer recurrence and rumination in relation to depression and anxiety symptoms](#)
- [Twelve-month and lifetime prevalence of mental disorders in cancer patients](#)

Sources

American Cancer Society. (2023, January 12). Lifetime risk of developing or dying from cancer. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/understanding-cancer-risk/lifetime-probability-of-developing-or-dying-from-cancer.html>

American Society of Clinical Oncology. Post-traumatic stress disorder and cancer. (2022, July 7). <https://www.cancer.net/coping-with-cancer/managing-emotions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-and-cancer>

Caruso, R., & Breitbart, W. (2020). Mental health care in oncology. Contemporary perspective on the psychosocial burden of cancer and evidence-based interventions. *Epidemiology and psychiatric sciences*, 29(e86), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045796019000866>