Article Series Maintaining Connections

How Cancer-Related Fatigue Can Affect Relationships

3 min read

☐ Like (0) Likes

Bookmark

Share

Print



All Maintaining Connections

Resize

A A A

Relationships and social connections can make a difference when you're living with cancer. But if you find it difficult to keep up with your community while living with cancer, know that you are not alone.

Cancer-related fatigue may be one reason why. Fatigue is a common symptom in cancer treatment. And it is one of the most common cancer treatment side effects, experienced by more than 4 in every 5 people having cancer treatment.

And the impact of cancer-related fatigue can be different from when you generally feel run down or don’t have a lot of energy. It can also affect your relationships with family, friends, and colleagues. Feeling too tired to go out, socialize, or check in with other people in your life can make it hard to stay connected. It’s one reason that many people living with cancer feel socially isolated or lonely at times.

For many people, living with cancer means living with fatigue. But with a few **Microsteps** – small steps that can be taken to build new healthy habits – it may be possible to stay in touch with people and maintain meaningful relationships.

Here are a few **Microsteps** to consider trying, even when you’re feeling tired. As always, consult with your care team for the management practices that are best for you.

Scheduling a phone date or video call today with a friend.

If you feel too tired for an in-person meetup, try taking advantage of technology to help you stay connected. Having company through the phone or computer, for example, may help you feel more supported. This may be particularly helpful during key moments, like waiting for test results.

Giving yourself permission to ask for what you need.

If people in your network want to support you, try telling them how they can help. For example, asking them to bring you some groceries, driving you to and from appointments, or picking up your child from school. Asking for help is a way to get support and stay connected at the same time.

Starting a group text.

Instead of texting multiple people individually, try sharing some updates and checking in with multiple friends or family members at once. A group chat can help you do this.

Searching online for local cancer support groups and asking your healthcare team about local resources.

Chances are, there are other people in your community on a similar journey. And connecting with others may present opportunities to openly discuss your fatigue in ways you otherwise wouldn’t have.

Starting a virtual book club.

If in-person gatherings make you feel tired, consider meeting up with friends on video to discuss a book you’re all reading at the same time. It might be a way to stay connected and give yourself something to look forward to.

Setting up a virtual movie night.

Try planning to watch the same movie at the same time with a friend or group of friends. Even if you can’t be together in person, you may feel more connected — and you can text or set up a video call afterward to discuss.

Making a gratitude list.

Try writing down the names of friends or family who have given you support since your diagnosis. You may wish to reach out to them to let them know how much their support means to you. Showing gratitude can be a powerful way to connect with others and remind yourself that you are supported.

Developed with Thrive Global