

Managing Distress



Noelle Mack, LCSW , OSW-C
Oncology Social Worker

Being diagnosed with cancer and going through treatments can be very stressful. Some signs of distress include but are not limited to:

- Changes in eating and sleep patterns.
- Feeling overwhelmed anxious, afraid, sad, and depressed.
- Strained relationships.
- Financial worries.

It is normal to have distress. When distress invades your thinking and acting, it is likely to impact your ability to live your “normal” life and participate in treatment.



Marie Fuentes-Harris, LCSW
Clinical Social Worker

The staff at Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital/Grayslake/Glenview Cancer Centers are here to help you cope with your stress. You will be asked to complete a **Distress Screening** throughout treatment. If you have increased distress or need assistance with additional resources, the Oncology Social Workers, **Noelle Mack, LCSW, OSW-C, and Marie Fuentes-Harris, LCSW**, are available to help you cope or alleviate stress during and after your treatment. Such resources may include but are not limited to:

- Fitness Programs
- Nutrition Consultations
- Wellness Programs
- Financial Assistance
- Educational programs
- Opportunities for participation in research
- Counseling and emotional support for patients and families.

There is no need to wait for Noelle or Marie to contact you if you have an immediate need. They can be reached directly via their phone numbers or emails:

NM Grayslake Cancer Center - Noelle Mack – (847)535-7441, Noelle.Mack@nm.org

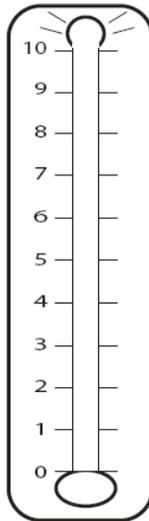
NM Lake Forest Hospital – Marie Fuentes-Harris – (224)271-6316, Marie.Fuentes-Harris@nm.org

NM Glenview Cancer Center – contact either Noelle or Marie.

We at NM Lake Forest Hospital/ Grayslake/ Glenview Cancer Centers acknowledge that everyone copes with cancer differently. Please don't hesitate to let the staff know if there is anything we can do to make your journey with cancer more manageable.



Extreme distress



No distress

Practical problems

- * Problems with activities: getting around, bathing, dressing, preparing, meals, chores.
- * Child care
- * Transportation
- * Work or school
- * Barriers to getting medicine
- * Barriers to getting medical care
- * Questions about advanced directives: Living Will, Power of Attorney for Health Care
- * Not knowing who you would call if you needed help.

Financial Concerns

- * Paying my bills
- * Insurance coverage
- * Paying for medication or medical care
- * Concerns about the ability to buy food

Family Concerns

- * Concerns about children.
- * Concerns about partner
- * Family health issues
- * Concerns about caregiver

Measuring Distress

You will be asked throughout your treatment to score your distress with the NCCN Distress Thermometer. Below are some items that may cause you distress. Please let your care provider know if you need help with any of these issues.

Concerns with Care Team

- * Understanding my condition or stages of cancer
- * Concerns about my medications, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or surgery.
- * Managing pain or side effects.
- * Understanding the goals of my treatment.
- * Questions about my treatment plan.
- * Concerns about ability to have children.
- * Concerns about using or abusing my pain medications.
- * Second opinion or clinical trial.
- * Concerns after cancer treatment

Emotional Concerns

- * Depression
- * Feeling fearful
- * Nervousness
- * Feeling stressed
- * Sadness
- * Feeling helpless
- * Worry
- * Loss of interest in usual activities.
- * Feeling like a burden to others
- * Feeling lonely.

Nutrition Concerns

- * Changes in weight
- * Understanding my nutrition needs
- * Tolerating my diet
- * Poor appetite or overeating

Physical Problems

- * Appearance
- * Bleeding
- * Breathing
- * Changes in urination
- * Diarrhea
- * Constipation
- * Eating
- * Chewing or swallowing
- * Feeling swollen
- * Fevers
- * Indigestion
- * Memory/concentration
- * Dry mouth/mouth sores
- * Nausea
- * Nose dry/congested
- * Pain
- * Sexual/intimacy
- * Skin problems
- * Sleep
- * Tingling/numbness in hands or feet

Spiritual/Religious Concerns

- * Loss and Grief
- * Guilt and Shame
- * Forgiveness
- * Death, dying, afterlife
- * Hopelessness
- * Meaning in illness and suffering
- * Beliefs or values challenged
- * Isolation from religious community
- * Relationship with God(deity)