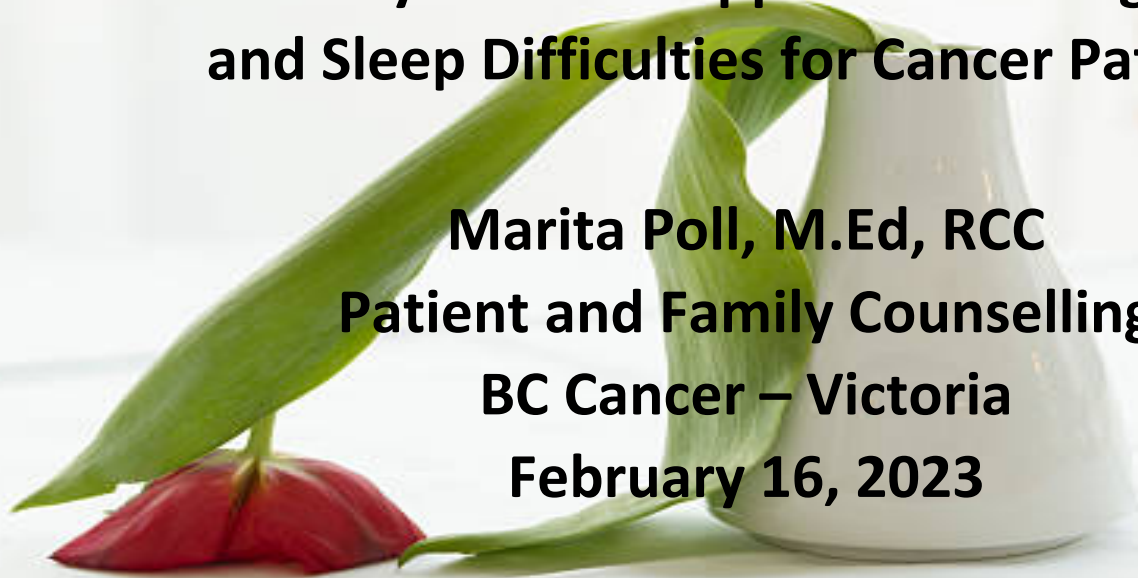


Tired of Feeling Tired?!?

**A Psychosocial Approach to Fatigue
and Sleep Difficulties for Cancer Patients**

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Patient and Family Counselling
BC Cancer – Victoria
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Cancer Related Fatigue - CRF

Welcome

- Reviewing condensed version of “Tired of Feeling Tired” slides
 - Psychosocial Approach to CRF and Sleep Difficulties, offered by Patient and Family Counselling (Patient Education workshop)
- Agenda: Recognizing & Coping with:
 - Week 1: Fatigue & Physical Health
 - Week 2: Fatigue & Psychological Health
 - Week 3: Sleep Difficulties
 - Each week has small and large groups, and homework

Cancer Related Fatigue - CRF

All 3 parts attend to:

- Education
- Self Awareness
- Self-Care Strategies: “internal” and “external”
- Resources: Building community

Cancer Related Fatigue - CRF

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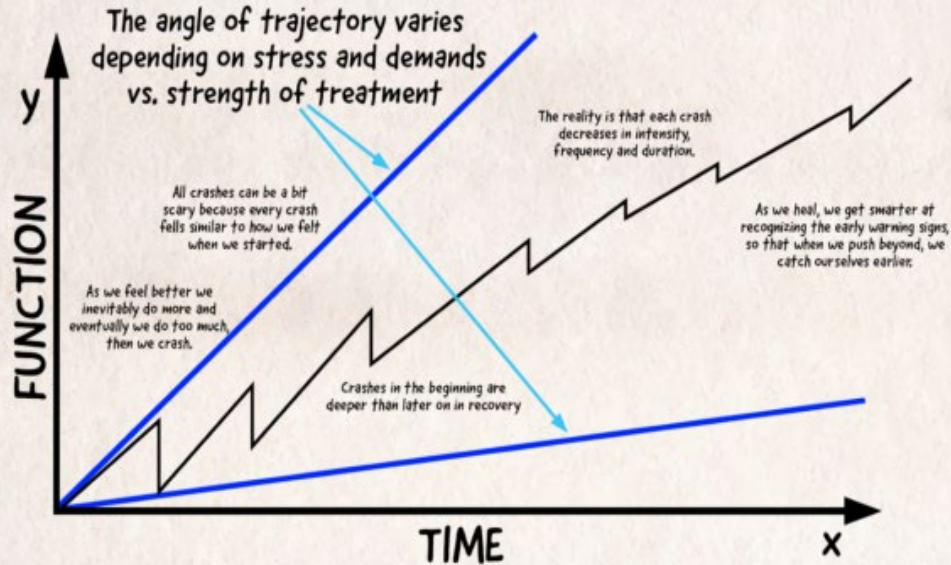
- Education
- Self Awareness
- Self-Care Strategies: “internal” and “external”
- Resources: Building community

Cancer Related Fatigue - CRF

Clinically – the focus is:

- Education about CRF **AND** the strategies that are effective ... it validates and normalizes, plus provide the vocabulary to understand and discuss experience (calms and soothes), strategies that research supports to be effective
- Self Awareness: use the vocabulary to soothe and calm, plus elicit meaning and needs, decrease stress
- Self-Care Strategies: “internal” and “external” - builds increases coping, decreases stress, increase sense of self being able to adapt and grapple with experiences that are difficult
- Resources: Building community – support and validates the reality of living with a cancer diagnosis, treatment and recovery, plus post-treatment adjustment, decreases stress

The Trajectory Of Healing



Your Cancer Related Fatigue



Cancer-Related Fatigue (CRF)

- *Emotional disturbance/mood disorder* — Fatigue seldom occurs by itself, and it commonly clusters with emotional distress, mood disorders, sleep disturbance, and/or pain. In particular, there is a strong correlation between fatigue and depression, and in some cases, it may be difficult to distinguish between the two as the source of distress.
- Patients with mild CRF that does not interfere with activities of daily living (ADLs) can be reassured and counseled as to coping strategies that conserve energy. CRF that is moderate to or interferes with basic or instrumental ADLs requires an assessment.

Cancer-related fatigue: Prevalence, screening, and clinical assessment (2023): Author: Carmen P Escalante, Editor: Paul J Hesketh, MD, Deputy Editor: Sadhna R Vora, MD

Cancer-Related Fatigue (CRF)

Definition

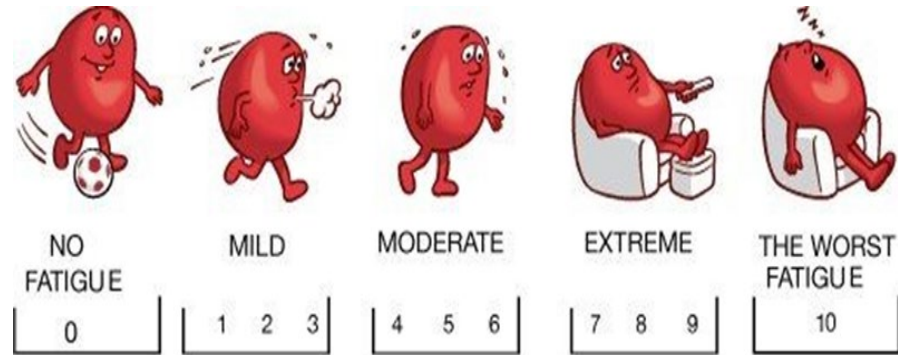
- Subjective feeling of tiredness
 - can interfere with function, not relieved by rest
- Most common side effect for cancer patients
- Can be distressing, persistent, and pervasive (physical-cognitive-emotional-social)
- Not related to recent activity.

Fatigue

- Patients may hesitate in reporting fatigue...why?
 - expected, inevitable, must be tolerated
 - fear of being labelled “a complainer”
 - fear of not receiving best or maximum cancer treatment
 - fear that fatigue is a “bad sign”

NCCN Cancer-Related Fatigue. v.2.2005
Cella D et al. Oncology (Huntingt) 1998; 12:369-377.

Fatigue, like pain, is best described by the person experiencing it.



Causes of Fatigue

General

- Physical: Hunger, sleep, chronic stress, aging, limited exercise, Dehydration, infection, nausea, pain, Anemia, thyroid, lack of vitamin D, chronic illnesses, medications
- Depression, anxiety

Cancer

- Cancer itself
 - Type, stage, location, individual characteristics
 - Brain cancer, lung cancer
- Cancer treatment
 - Surgery, Radiation, Chemotherapy, Other Medications (HRT)
 - Physical Deconditioning and Pain

Fatigue and Surgery



- Almost 100% of patients have fatigue
- Often worse about 7 days after surgery
- Most people return to normal about 1-3 months after surgery

Fatigue & Chemotherapy

- Almost 100% of patients experience
- Fatigue usually lower prior to next chemotherapy treatment
- Increases over course of treatment
- Begins to lessen 2-3 months after treatment is finished



Fatigue & Radiation Therapy

- Close to 50% of patients experience
- Often begins to build around treatment #10
- Increases over the course of treatment
- Begins to lessen 2-3 months after treatment is finished



Cognitive symptoms of fatigue

Difficulty with:

- Multi-tasking
- Focusing or paying attention
- Memory

May Impact:

- Completing daily tasks
- Returning to work
- Levels of energy (especially post-treatment)

Example: Small group discussion - Breakout Rooms

How do you describe your cancer-related fatigue?

- 10 minutes for the small group discussion
- Remember to give all members in your group time to share
- Choose one person to share key points of discussion during large group debriefing

- Large Group Debrief – 15 minutes

Managing fatigue

Physical health strategies to decrease fatigue:

- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Energy Management



Exercise

- Research has shown us that exercise:
 - Lowers fatigue by 40-50%
 - Improves survival
 - Lowers the risk of breast cancer recurrence
 - Is important, even during treatment

Muscle deconditioning (inactivity) can create fatigue

Exercise

- Thought of exercising can be overwhelming
- Do regular, mild to moderate exercise.
 - **DON'T** do infrequent, intense workouts ...fatiguing
- Resting too much increases fatigue (muscle deconditioning)
- Description of exercises on Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center website: <https://www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/patient-education/managing-cancer-related-fatigue-exercise>

Exercise – Self Care Goals

- Identify what exercise you enjoy doing (more likely to do it)
- Start slowly and increase your activity over time, e.g., start out walking for 5-10 minutes 2-3 times a week. The slowly increase to 20-30 minutes 3-5 times per week
 - Start from where you are at and build from there
- Use the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely)

Exercise Resources

- 811 Exercise Specialist
- Inspire Health: online exercise classes, Exercise Physiologist for individual guidance
- BC Cancer Website
 - <http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/health-info/coping-with-cancer/exercise-support>

Nutrition

Fuel for the fire



Eat well

- Drink fluids regularly
- Protein and snacks
- Anemia – common with chemotherapy, can create fatigue, follow up with a Registered Dietician for foods high in iron

Protein

For information on the importance of protein and high protein food choices, go to:

<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/nutrition/nutrition-handouts>

Nutrition Resources

- 811 Oncology Dietician (Mon-Fri, 830-430), plus online <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating/your-condition/nutrition-people-cancer>
- BC Cancer – Registered Dieticians – patients at high risk of malnutrition
- BC Cancer Medical Librarian – 250-519-5517
- Inspire Health

Homework – Week 1


- Education: What new information did I learn?
- Self Awareness: Reflect on your fatigue. When is it highest? Lowest?
- Self-Care Strategies: What strategies do I want to begin?
- Resources: Did I learn about any resources that can help me build community and support?

Part 2: Fatigue: Psychological Health & Coping



Welcome Back!

House Keeping and Homework Review



Me: I need to do a
thing.

Body: You did a thing
yesterday. That's
enough things.

Example: Breakout Rooms

What do you find tiring mentally and emotionally?

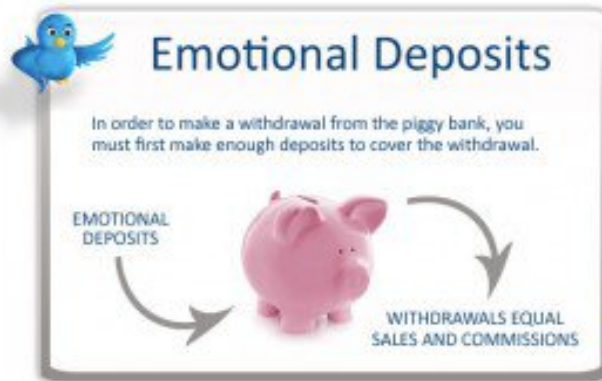
- 8-10 minutes
- Give all members in your group time to share
- Choose one person to share key points of discussion in large group

Large Group

- 10 minutes
- Key points or “ah ha” moments

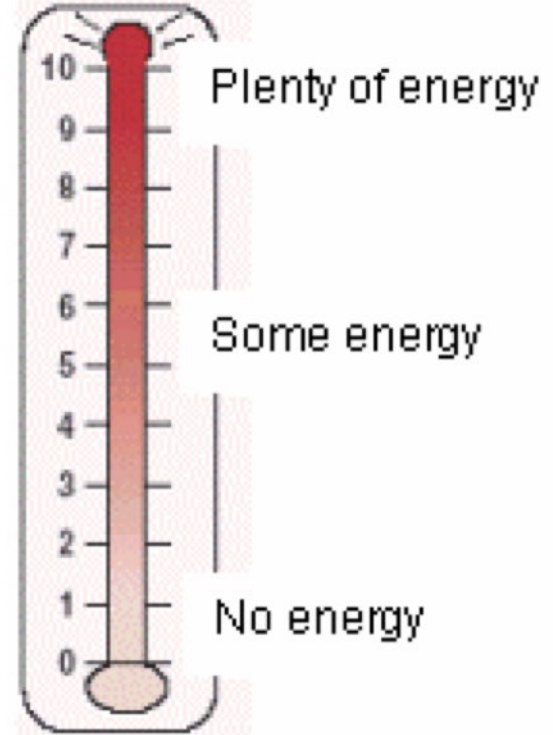
Energy Management: Your "Energy Bank"

"Energy Conservation"...A **balance** needs to be maintained between **energy spent** and **energy saved**



Awareness.....

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Mon				Mon			
Doing				Doing			
Tues				Tues			
Doing				Doing			
Wed				Wed			
Doing				Doing			
Thurs				Thurs			
Doing				Doing			
Fri				Fri			
Doing				Doing			
Sat				Sat			
Doing				Doing			
Sun				Sun			
Doing				Doing			



Review your Activities

- Make a list of activities that need accomplishing and prioritize. Be realistic about finishing tasks yourself
- Determine which activities you could ask for help with
- Think about what friends, family members or community groups are willing to help with and delegate
 - This helps them as well... “love jar”

Energy Saving Strategies

Saving energy

- Planning
- Pacing
- People (drain, sustain)
- Activities
- Positioning

Prioritizing

- Meal preparation
- Childcare
- Work
- Leisure

Offers: “The Love Jar”

Who	What	What are they good at?	My ask	
Jim	Driving	Making me Laugh		
Marie	Cleaning	Cleaning & hugging		

Stamina: Your "Gas Tank"

- Stamina: physical, cognitive, emotional, social
- Metaphor: "gas tank"
 - Cancer and treatment has depleted gas tank
 - You will forget the above daily
 - "Gas tank" is invisible to you and others
 - Can take 6-18 months to rebuild, but it's a "bell curve"
 - Human response: impatient and unrealistic
 - Ability to handle stress can be reduced (less resilient)

Building Skills

- Acknowledge & accept changing personal limitations
- “It’s not just me” (pressure, self-judgment, isolation)
- Learn to communicate your new personal limitations, even to yourself

"Common Humanity" (Kristin Neff)

- Fatigue & Energy Scales helps communicate level of fatigue
- Learn to talk about your level of fatigue to family members & friends (use Scales)
 - You may look 'normal' to them
 - Fatigue is on "the inside", not visible

Some challenges you may face

- Your own expectations
- What other people expect of you
- Day-to-day needs (e.g., caregiving)
- Permission to put your needs ahead of others
- Recognize, respect, pace yourself

Update Your Coping Skills and Perspective

- Give yourself permission to care for yourself
 - explore what is restorative and what is draining
- Try keeping a journal or diary for tracking purposes and the support of expression, “putting things into words”
- Seek out support – people who “get it”, what it is like to live with this kind condition and treatment
- Recognize and celebrate when you reach goals
- Be patient with yourself

Self Care Practice Exercises

- Self check-in
- Self-Soothing and Grounding
- Orienting (5-4-3-2-1)
- Breathing – google breathing exercises like “box breathing”, “coherent breathing”, “4-7-8 breathing”

Quieting the Body

Rest is often as good as sleep during the day.

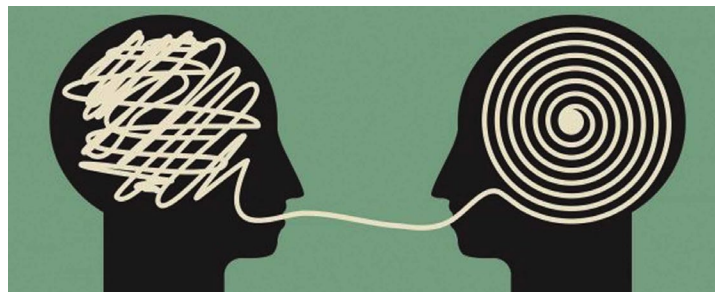
Ways we are 'hard-wired' to relax

- Breathe and breathing exercises
- Self-soothing, grounding
- Play
- Laughter
- Touch – especially hugs & soothing touch
- Eye to eye contact – feeling seen & heard
- Music & dance
- Animals and nature
- Moderate exercise and gentle stretching



Quieting the Mind

- Physical touch – holding your forehead, hand on chest
- Self check-in
- Journaling
- Meditation
- Weighted blanket
- Calming music
- Thought stopping (Google)
- Do things that:
 - Give you a sense of hope and purpose
 - Give you pleasure and a sense of well-being



Quieting the “Heart”

When emotions become heightened or intense, they can use a lot of energy

- *Practice Exercise: Think of a situation in your life that is difficult, that is causing you stress.*
- *Try to actually feel the stress & emotional discomfort in your body.*



Now, say to yourself:

1. This is a moment of emotional discomfort

That's mindfulness (awareness).

2. Feeling discomfort is a part of life.

That's common humanity (community).

- Put your hands over your heart, feel the warmth of your hands and the gentle touch of your hands on your chest. Or adopt the soothing touch you discovered felt right for you.

3. May I be kind to myself

That is self-kindness.

- You can also ask yourself, “What do I need to hear right now to express kindness to myself?”
- www.self-compassion.org
- [Resources ~ RAIN: Recognize, Allow, Investigate, Nurture - Tara Brach](#)



Social Support: My Community

- Consider who gives you support and who may drain your energy. Practice setting boundaries for right now.
- <https://psychcentral.com/lib/10-way-to-build-and-preserve-better-boundaries#10-tips>



Resources for Support and Community

- BC Cancer website [BC Cancer](#)
 - Support program page [Support Programs \(bccancer.bc.ca\)](#)
 - Coping – Symptoms [Coping with Cancer \(bccancer.bc.ca\)](#)
 - Supportive Care e-bulletin
 - Library [Library \(bccancer.bc.ca\)](#)
 - Pathfinders – Exercise, Stress, Life After Cancer

Resources for Support and Community

- BC Cancer website cont'd
 - Relaxation Group – see next slide
 - Community Virtual Programs list [Support Programs \(bccancer.bc.ca\)](https://www.bccancer.bc.ca/support-programs)
 - BC Cancer audio recordings for relaxation
<https://soundcloud.com/phsabc>
- Inspire Health: online class schedule <https://www.inspirehealth.ca/>
- Wellspring: online support program <https://wellspring.ca/the-wellspring-approach/>



Provincial Health Services Authority

Relaxation & Music Therapy Group

Do you often feel anxious, nervous, or notice that you can't relax?
Do you want to learn ways to calm your mind and relax your body?



Tuesdays, 2:30 pm
and Thursdays, 10:30 am

Join us for an online guided imagery and music therapy experience, designed to promote relaxation and nervous system regulation.

Groups are led by certified music therapist Carolyn Neapole, and co-facilitated by a team of counsellors from BC Cancer locations across the province.

No prior experience is necessary, and all patients, family members, and caregivers are welcome.

Registration required:

Please contact [Patient & Family Counselling](#)

[BC Cancer – Vancouver](#)

604.877.6000 ext. 672194

or toll free 1.800.663.3333 ext.672194

Resources

- Anxiety BC. Mindshift Groups and Mindshift app
<https://www.anxietycanada.com/mindshift-groups>
- BC Association of Living Mindfully. Art of Living Mindfully -
<https://www.bcalm.ca/what-we-offer/art-of-living-mindfully>
(limited e-classes available)
- Palouse: free, 8-week, online mindfulness-based stress reduction program (curriculum/program accessed at any time of day)
www.palousemindfulness.org

Resources

- **Fatigue Dr. Mike!**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTFPMYGe86s>
- Mind over Mood apps & books
www.thriveport.com/products/moodkit/
- Stop Panic & Anxiety Self-Help app
- Emotions: <http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/health-info/coping-with-cancer/emotional-support>
- Inspire Health <https://www.inspirehealth.ca/>



Home work

- **Education:** List any questions you may have from Session #2
- **Self-Awareness and Self-Care:**
 - Create a brief message of support you would have said to yourself during treatment or healing if you knew then what you have experienced now
 - Bring 2 specific tips that you have found most helpful in managing fatigue
- **Resources:** Look up some of the resources identified in Session #2

Home work Review

Please share your experience in the last week's session in the chat box:

- Education: questions you may have
- Self-Awareness and Self-Care: tips you found most helpful
- Resources: you found useful

SLEEP HABITS

Use this form to identify your current sleep habits:

Habit or condition	Usually	Often	Sometimes	Never
Go to bed at the same time				
Use bed for other things than sleep or sex				
Nap during the day				
Drink caffeine, alcohol or smoke in the evening				
Bedroom is noisy or doesn't block out light				
I toss and turn in bed for hours				
Exercise before going to bed				
Eat before going to bed				
Use sleep medication				

Benefits of Sleep

- Sleep prepares our brains for making new memories and then cements those new memories and prevents forgetting.
- Sleep also helps our “system”, both physically and psychologically, to repair itself.

Strategies for a Better Sleep

- Stick to a sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each and every day. A schedule positively reinforces a “sleep habit”.
- Sleeping in on the weekends will not make up for lack of sleep during the week.



Strategies Cont'd.

- Exercise is excellent ... but not too late in the day. Try to finish any exercise at least 2-3 hours prior to bedtime.



Strategies Cont'd.

- Avoid caffeine (e.g., coffee, black tea, chocolate, and colas) in late afternoon or early evening. This process can take up to 8 hours in some people.
- Avoid beverages containing alcohol before bed. Alcohol can cause you to wake up in the middle of the night.



Strategies Cont'd.

- Avoid large meals late at night. A light snack is fine.
- You also want to avoid going to bed hungry. Some light and healthy snacks that will not disrupt sleep are: slice of cheese and crackers; a handful of almonds; a small serving of fruit; a boiled egg.



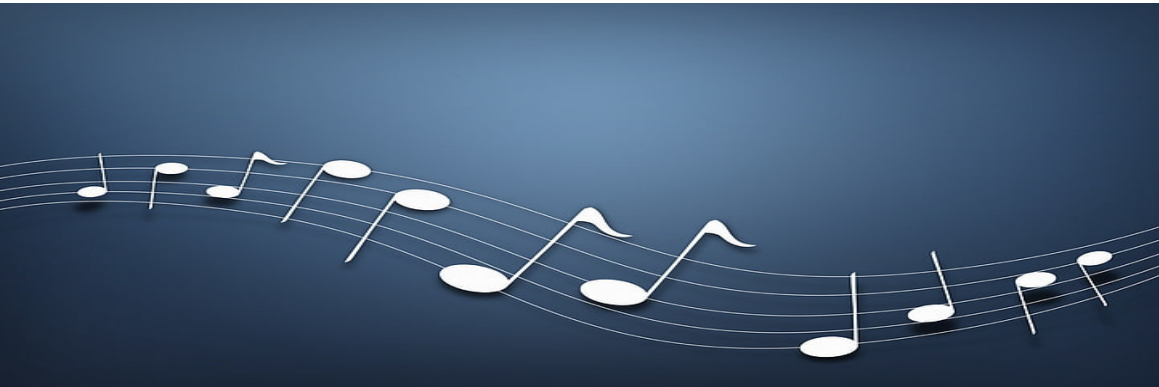
Strategies Cont'd.

- Relaxing activities to promote getting back to sleep are knitting; jigsaw puzzles; listening to soothing music; reading a good book.
- If possible, try to avoid napping in the day if you are reconfiguring your sleep and wake times. If you do nap, try to have your short nap (20 minutes) prior to 3 pm.



Strategies Cont'd.

- Take a warm bath before bed. The drop in body temperature after getting out of the bath may help you feel sleepy.
- Try relaxing activities before bed such as reading or listening to music.
- BC Cancer audio recordings for relaxation - <https://soundcloud.com/phsabc>



Strategies Cont'd.

- Design your bedroom for optimal sleeping: dark, cool, and no blue screen lights from electronic gadgets. The bedroom is for sleeping and sex only.
- Remember – if you are going to watch, read or listen to anything in the middle of the night, pick something that is boring or “non-stimulating”.



Strategies Cont'd.

- Do not stay in bed awake for longer than 20 minutes. Get up and choose a relaxing activity from your list. Return to bed when sleepy.



Sleep Resources

Body Scan Exercise for Sleep

- www.paulousemindfulness.com

Sleep Podcasts

- Various podcasts for sleep, relaxation and an interesting lecture on sleep science.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/podcasts-for-sleep>

<https://sendmetosleep.com/best-sleep-podcast/>

Resources

- **Why Do We Sleep: Unlocking The Power of Sleep and Dreams (Mathew Walker, 2017)**
- <http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/health-info/coping-with-cancer/managing-symptoms-side-effects/sleeping-problems>
- www.sleepfoundation.org
- https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/sites/default/files/healthwise/documents/form_tm4434.pdf
- **The Trajectory of Healing, Dr. Andrew Neville**
<https://www.healing.org/>

For Reflection...

- Education: what information did I learn?
- Self Awareness & Self-Care Strategies: what strategies do I want to practice moving forward?
- Resources: are there resources I would like to explore further?

Thank you and References

- Accessed online at <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/supportivecare/sleepdisorders>.
- A. Williamson and A. Feyer, “Moderate Sleep Deprivation Produces Impairments in cognitive and Motor Performance Equivalent to Legally Prescribed Levels of Alcohol Intoxication, : *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 57 (2000): 649-655.
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