



CANCERcare®

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fact sheet

# THE VALUE OF ONCOLOGY SOCIAL WORKERS

When a person is diagnosed with cancer, it seems everyone is focused, and rightly so, on that person's physical well-being: treatments, side effects, doctor's visits, tests. But we know there are other parts of life affected by cancer: self-image, work, family, friendships, and your approach to living. Oncology social workers understand these complex issues raised by cancer. More importantly, an oncology social worker knows that finding ways to cope with these concerns brings an enormous sense of relief to both the person with cancer and their loved ones.

## ONCOLOGY SOCIAL WORKERS

Oncology social workers are licensed professionals who counsel people affected by cancer, providing emotional support and helping people access practical assistance.

Oncology social workers can provide individual counseling, support groups, locate services that help with home care or transportation, and guide people through the process of applying for Social Security disability or other forms of assistance. CancerCare's oncology social workers are available to help face-to-face, online or on the telephone, free of charge.



Dana, CancerCare Client

## COPING WITH PRACTICAL CONCERNS

Managing cancer treatments and costs can be overwhelming. There are appointments to keep and bills to pay, as well as paperwork to manage. An oncology social worker can help you find resources and financial assistance based on your diagnosis.

**Better understanding of your diagnosis and treatment.** An oncology social worker can help you understand your diagnosis and treatment plans. Your health care team can involve many members and an oncology social worker can also help you improve communication with your team.

**Financial assistance and co-pay assistance.** Having health insurance doesn't guarantee that you can afford treatment. Even with insurance coverage, out-of-pocket expenses such as co-pays for medications can add up very quickly. An oncology social worker can help people navigate resources based on individual needs. CancerCare provides limited co-pay assistance and financial assistance for transportation, home care and child care.

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## PROVIDING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

A cancer diagnosis turns a person's world upside down emotionally and physically. When it comes to changes in our bodies, no matter what age, those changes will challenge how we see ourselves and our perception of how others see us. An oncology social worker can help you cope with this "new normal."

**Counseling.** Feeling stressed or anxious while coping with cancer is common. You may also experience your body reacting differently to certain foods or feel tired more often. Face-to-face or telephone counseling provides a safe space to voice any concerns to better cope with these changes.

**Support groups.** Building a support network can lessen the isolation that often comes with a cancer diagnosis. A support group is a unique opportunity to connect with others impacted by cancer. CancerCare provides support groups online, over the phone and face-to-face. We offer 120+ online support groups each year for specific cancer diagnoses, caregivers and the bereaved that are password-protected.

**Community programs.** An oncology social worker can help find local resources for anyone affected by cancer.



*CancerCare's Director of Regional Programs  
Kathleen Nugent, MSW, LCSW*

### **CancerCare® Can Help**

Founded in 1944, CancerCare is the leading national organization providing free support services and information to help people manage the emotional, practical and financial challenges of cancer. Our comprehensive services include counseling and support groups over the phone, online and in-person, educational workshops, publications and financial and co-payment assistance. All CancerCare services are provided by professional oncology social workers and world-leading cancer experts.

To learn more, visit [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org) or call **800-813-HOPE (4673)**.

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