

Art & Soul

Increasing evidence is showing that in addition to advanced medical treatments and supportive therapies, a bright attitude and optimistic outlook helps improve health and well-being.

Your body isn't the only thing that has to confront cancer; your mind has a battle to fight too. Living with cancer may create a range of emotions including, confusion, fear and stress. These emotions can cause a physical reaction, which could drain energies that are vital to the healing process. What goes on in our minds affects our bodies, and vice versa, and this is referred to as the mind-body connection.

As a result of this connection, it is important to keep your spirits high, ward off stress and stay mentally prepared for the journey. Sharing your feelings is one way to relieve worries and an opportunity to connect with others. You may find it difficult to share their emotions in words, but finding a creative outlet or utilizing art therapy is another way to express feelings and increase self-awareness.



Expressing yourself through creativity has many documented benefits. While reducing stress, it may promote healing, increase energy and reduce pain. In addition, it could improve well-being, quality of life and better prepare you to cope with your treatments. The great thing about expressing yourself through creativity is that anyone can do it. "Our activity classes are a chance for our guests to take a mental break from their 'battle' and enjoy a game or make a simple craft," says Jennifer Kehren, Cancer Treatment Centers of America® (CTCA) H.O.P.E. team service alliance coordinator.

"No special art skill is required, either. You just need a desire to participate." Maybe you have a passion for photography, painting, music or poetry. Or maybe you enjoy knitting, dancing, cooking, gardening or another form of expression. Whatever it is that moves you, creativity is an uplifting and life-enriching diversion that helps you relax, as well as supports your immune system so you feel better. Plus it is just plain fun.

Terrece Crawford, CTCA patient and Cancer Fighter, describes her experience with art, "It has allowed me to express my journey with breast cancer in ways that words could not. The release of feelings and emotions came through the intensity of colors, textures, various art mediums and divine inspiration to create something beautiful during an arduous time. Art expression gave me a sense of empowerment to stay focused on my healing by having a creative, positive and hopeful outlet that I was able to share with others as well."

Suggested Reading:

Art Therapy Can Reduce Pain And Anxiety In Cancer Patients

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/01/060102104539.htm>

Art therapy helps cancer patients put emotions to paper

http://www2.newsadvance.com/lna/news/local/article/art_therapy_helps_cancer_patients_put_emotions_to_paper/17588/

Art therapy ups breast cancer patients' well-being

<http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSTRE51B62W20090212>

Art therapy is used to help people manage physical and emotional problems by using creative activities to express emotions.

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/ETO/content/ETO_5_3X_Art_Therapy.asp?sitearea=ETO