

# Dealing with grief on the cancer journey

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Cancer isn't just a physical struggle but also an emotional one, as patients, survivors and their loved ones experience grief and loss throughout the experience.

Gabrielle Alvarez, a [social worker](#) at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, offered some [tips to help patients and caregivers](#) manage their feelings.

Alvarez, a certified grief counselor, noted that accepting that [big emotions](#) will be part of the process. These can include shock and disbelief, fear and anxiety, anger, guilt, blame, sadness and loss of control.

These emotions are common and natural reactions to difficult situations, Alvarez said in a Rutgers news release. Recognizing and [accepting](#) them is important for [emotional health](#).

Patients and their caregivers should seek support when they need it, she said.

Share how you are feeling, Alvarez advised. Turning to others who have experienced losses or talking to a close friend or family member can help. Cancer support groups in person or online can help you connect with others who've had similar experiences.

Be kind to yourself, Alvarez urged. Eat [nutritious meals](#) and get enough sleep. Other forms of self-care can include deep breathing, spending time in nature, taking a warm bath, and expressing your feelings through art, music or poetry.

And, she concluded, don't hesitate to get more guidance from a professional if you feel the need.

**More information:** The American Cancer Society has more on [mental health for people with cancer](#).



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