

Services Provided:

- Individual therapy
- Group therapy
- Pre-surgical evaluations
- Psychological evaluations

Current and previous issues of the CHP monthly newsletters are now on our website under "News & Info."



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Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is a significant cause of morbidity and mortality among women; it is the second leading cause of death due to cancer in women, exceeded only by lung cancer (American Cancer Society, 2007). The emotional turmoil that comes with a diagnosis of breast cancer can affect women's physical health as well as their psychological well-being.

According to the American Psychological Association, receiving a diagnosis of breast cancer can be one of the most distressing events women ever experience. Distress typically continues after the initial shock of the diagnosis

has passed. As women begin what is often a lengthy treatment process, they may find themselves faced with new problems. They may find their personal relationships in turmoil, for instance. They may feel tired all the time. They may be very worried about their symptoms, treatment, and mortality. They may face discrimination from employers or insurance companies. Factors like these can contribute to chronic stress, anxiety, and depression.

A breast cancer diagnosis can severely impair a woman's psychological functioning, which in

turn can jeopardize her physical health. But it doesn't have to be that way. Women who seek help from licensed psychologists with experience in breast cancer treatment can actually use the mind-body connection to their advantage to enhance both mental and physical health.

This is the tenth of our monthly CHP newsletters. Please feel free to email us with topic requests, questions, etc. for future issues.

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Psychosocial Risk Factors

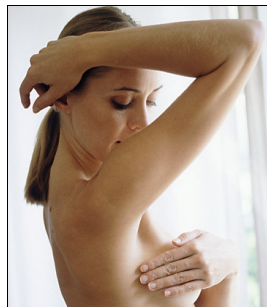
There is conflicting data regarding the possible association of psychosocial factors and survival in patients with breast cancer. One systematic review (Falagas et al., 2007) found that increased survival in breast cancer is associated with role functioning, fighting spirit, joy, perceived social support, social support, adjustment, anger, extroversion, expressive activities, participation in religious/non-religious groups, hobbies, female child, and marriage. The same review found that decreased survival in

breast cancer is associated with stressful events, anxiety/stress, hopelessness, depression, repressive defensiveness, denial/avoidance, and anger/hostility.

According to the American Psychological Association, researchers estimate that 20 to 60 percent of breast cancer patients experience depressive symptoms which can make it more difficult for women to adjust, participate optimally in treatment activities, and take advantage of whatever sources of social

support are available.

Licensed psychologists help women learn how to cope with the physical, emotional and lifestyle changes associated with cancer as well as with medical treatments that can be painful and traumatic. By teaching patients problem-solving strategies in a supportive environment, psychologists help women work through their grief, fear, and other emotions. For many women, this life-threatening crisis eventually proves to be an opportunity for life-enhancing personal growth.



Breast Cancer Statistics

- In 2004, 186,772 women and 1,815 men were diagnosed with breast cancer (www.cdc.gov)
- In 2004, 40,954 women and 362 men died from breast cancer (www.cdc.gov)
- About 1.3 million women will be diagnosed with breast cancer annually worldwide and about 465,000 will die from the disease (American Cancer Society)
- In 2008, there will be an estimated 182,460 (female) and 1,990 (male) new breast cancer cases in the United States (www.cancer.gov)
- In 2008, there will be an estimated 40,480 (female) and 450 (male) breast cancer deaths in the United States (www.cancer.gov)
- From 2001-2005 the median age at diagnosis for cancer of the breast was 61 years of age (www.seer.cancer.gov)
- From 2001-2005 the median age at death for cancer of the breast was 69 years of age (www.seer.cancer.gov)
- Based on rates from 2003-2005, 12.03% of women born today will be diagnosed with cancer of the breast at some time during their lifetime (www.seer.cancer.gov)
- In the United States, the incidence of breast cancer has decreased significantly by 3.5% per year from 2001 to 2004 among women (www.cdc.gov)
- In the United States, deaths from breast cancer have decreased significantly by 2.2% per year from 1990 to 2004 among women (www.cdc.gov)



Psychosocial Treatment Approaches www.apa.org

For women with breast cancer, a combination of individual and group treatment approaches sometimes works best. Individual sessions with a licensed psychologist typically emphasize the understanding and modification of patterns of thinking and behavior. Group psychological treatment with others who have breast cancer gives women a chance to give and receive emotional support and learn from the experiences of others. To be most effective, groups should be made up of women at similar stages of the dis-

ease and led by psychologists or other mental health professionals with experience in breast cancer treatment.

Whether aimed at individuals or groups, psychological interventions strive to help women adjust to their diagnoses, cope with treatment and come to terms with the disease's impact on their lives.

These interventions offer psychologists an opportunity to help women better understand breast cancer and its treatment. Psychologists typically ask women open-

ended questions about their assumptions, ideas for living life more fully and other matters. Although negative thoughts and feelings are addressed, most psychological interventions focus on problem-solving as women meet each new challenge.

A breast cancer diagnosis can severely impair a woman's psychological functioning, which in turn can jeopardize her physical health. But it doesn't have to be that way. Women who seek help from licensed psychologists with experience in breast cancer treatment can actually use the mind-body connection to their advantage to enhance both mental and physical health.

