

The Big rdeal
Coping with Cancer Emotions



Cancer Is Emotional

External Forces

Fear of death, sense of responsibility, stigma, new doctor with specialized focus, complexity/uncertainty



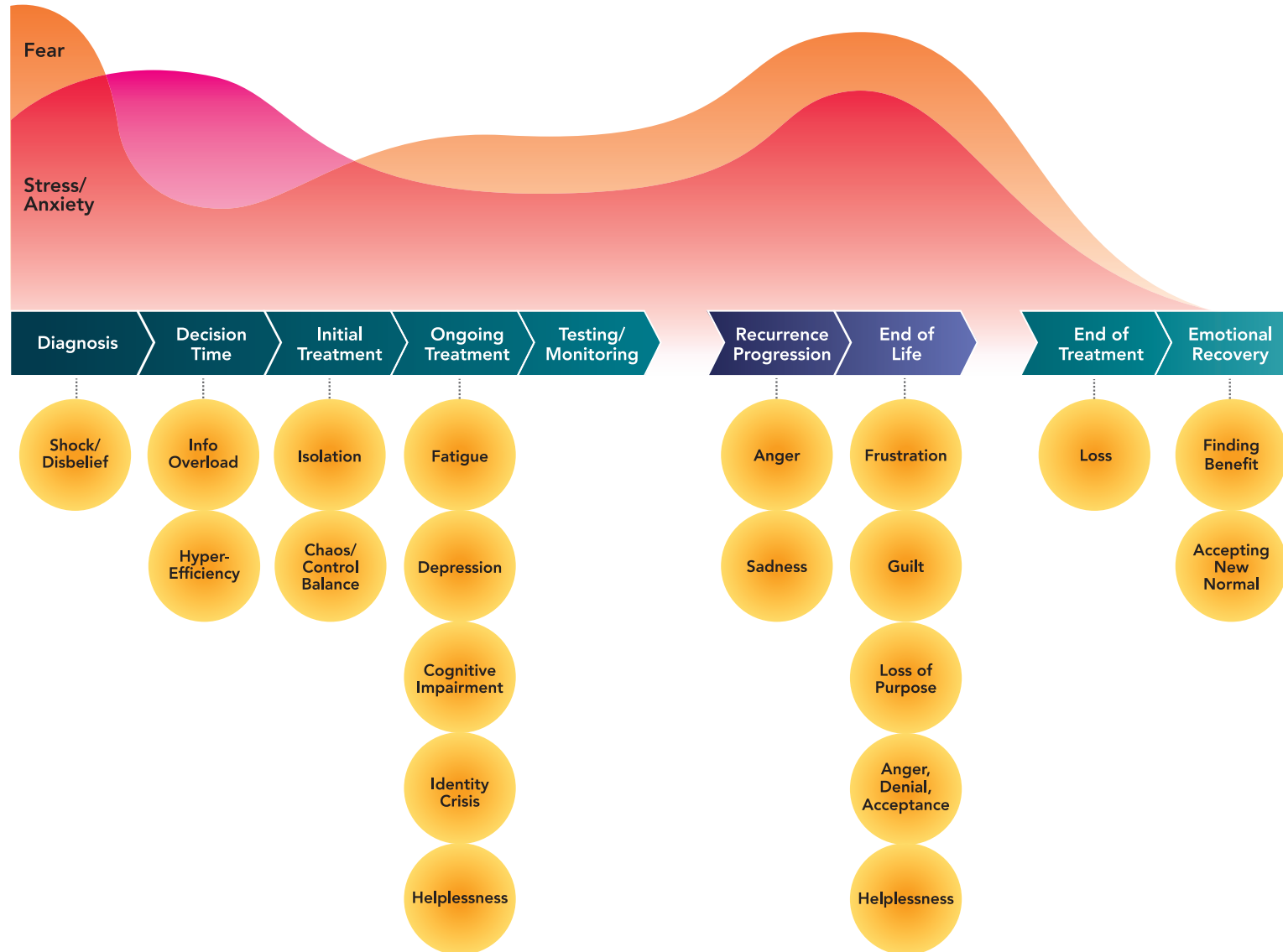
Internal Forces

Physiological changes drive brain chemistry, including inflammation, cytokines, hormones, stress and fatigue



The Big Ordeal

The Emotional Turmoil of Cancer



Intimacy Takes a Hit

Physical and emotional changes contribute to distance in our emotional and physical relationships.

Emotional Changes

- Holding back: fear, stress
- Self image
- Concern for partner/friends/family
- Feelings of dependence and/or lack of deserving more attention



Physical Changes

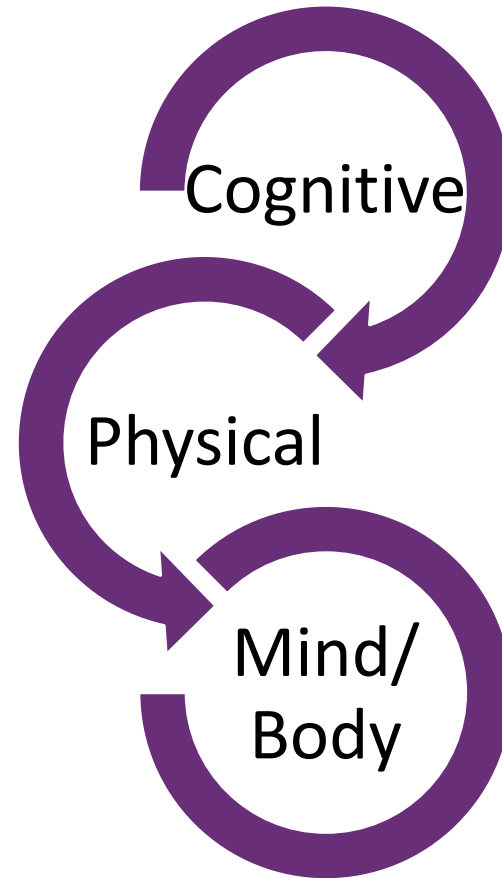
- Fatigue
- Hormonal changes
- Sensation changes
- Physical changes from surgeries, scarring, etc.
- Lack of time



How Do You Cope?

The Right Way to Cope is the Way That Works For You

- Coping styles vary
- Evolve with experience
- Benefit from family, friends, peer support, professional intervention



Advice From Those Who Have Been There

- Accept it, own it, manage it.
- One step/day at a time.
- It's going to be full of ups and downs, so roll with it.
- Ask...questions, for help, why.
- Share, share, share.
- Advocate for yourself—Know that *you* are the expert on *you*.
- Get the support you need.
- Take care of yourself – your emotions and your body.
- The only right way to cope is the one that works for you.

