

[TRACK 1: INTRODUCTION]

Narrator: Robert O’Gorman

[Lloyd]

I want to keep up with information about cancer research so that if some new kind of treatment for my cancer comes along, I will know about it and be ready to see if I might benefit from it.

[Antonio]

The librarian helped me use the computer and find information about prostate cancer from the National Cancer Institute’s Cancer.gov Web site. I also got a list of drug companies that help cancer survivors pay for the different kinds of medicines that I might need.

[Gloria]

My daughter and I have learned that it is important to get the right kind of information from the right places. I have also learned it is OK to ask for help. It is also OK to say, ‘I’m not ready,’ or, ‘I’m not interested right now,’ when people give me more information than I can handle.

[Narrator]

Welcome to the Cancer Survival Toolbox® program entitled “Finding Information.” Cancer survivors -- and, by that we mean people living with a diagnosis of cancer -- know that managing their cancer takes strength, courage, and good information. Many cancer survivors say that the quality of their lives is better because of what they learned about dealing with their cancer. More than a few survivors claim their very survival is due to their wise use of information. After listening to this program, you will know how to find information in your community and from other sources, and judge the quality of the information you find about your cancer and its treatment.

[Narrator]

“Finding Information” is just one of a series of Cancer Survival Toolbox programs designed to help you learn the basic skills essential to self-advocacy. There are also programs on communicating, making decisions, solving problems, negotiating, and ways to stand up for your rights. In addition, there are programs on special topics like finding ways to pay for care and living beyond cancer, as well as programs on different types of cancers. You can listen to or read these programs online at www.canceradvocacy.org/toolbox; you can also download the audio files from iTunes.

The Cancer Survival Toolbox comes with a free Resource Booklet, also available at www.canceradvocacy.org/toolbox. Resources and organizations related to each Cancer Survival Toolbox topic are included.

Now, let’s talk more about the topic of this program, finding information.

[Narrator]

The moment you think you might have cancer, you start looking for information to help yourself make decisions. Information can help you find answers to your questions. Information can also help you to form, and ask, questions. This program deals with finding and using information so that you can weigh options and make good decisions.

[If you would like to follow along with written material while listening to this program, please visit

the toolbox website at www.cancersurvivaltoolbox.org, where you can print a copy of the transcript.]

[Narrator]

We will start off by reviewing the many reasons why good information can be so important to you in helping you get the best treatment and knowing what to expect from the treatment you choose. Then, we'll talk about how to find information, who to ask, and what resources may be available to you in your area. We will also talk about how you should judge good information from information that may not be as good. Finally, we will hear how three cancer survivors faced their challenges, learned to ask important questions, and get the information they needed to make their best choices.

[Narrator]

First, let's talk about why good information can be so important to you. Many people feel a sense of panic when their doctor tells them that they have cancer. They might feel a need to rush to make a decision and start treatment as soon as possible. One of the first things to know about cancer is that, most of the time, cancer is NOT an emergency. Almost everyone with a new diagnosis of cancer has time to look for information and make careful, thoughtful decisions. Take time to find the best information and to think it through carefully. Your doctor, nurse, or social worker can give you some guidance on how quickly you will need to make decisions.

[Narrator]

Having and understanding the facts can help you care for yourself better, give you self-confidence, reduce anxiety, and help relieve distressing symptoms. Most people with cancer, and their family members, want to be involved in their care, and to be true partners with the health-care team. To become involved you need to understand the information you find. In many ways, this is like learning a new language -- we could call it the "language of cancer." Information lets you and your family members take your rightful roles as partners on the health-care team. Let's hear what Joan, an oncology nurse, says about how information can be important to you.