

[TRACK 4: SURVIVOR STORIES: IDENTIFYING RESOURCES]

Antonio, 60 years old

[Antonio]

After my regular doctor found that I had prostate cancer, I made an appointment to see a cancer doctor. I asked my grown son to go to the appointment with me so he could ask questions and also help me to remember what the doctor said. I had been given some information about treatment for my cancer, but I was not sure I had enough information to decide what to do. I don't know anyone else who has this cancer.

[Antonio]

I have heard a lot about the Internet and I thought maybe I could find some information there, but I do not own a computer. So my son helped me find a library in our neighborhood that has computers that are hooked up to the Internet. I wrote a list of things I wanted to find out about and made an appointment with the librarian who could help with my search. I wanted to find out about different treatments and any side effects. I also wanted to know if I could get help paying for any of the medicines I would need.

[Antonio]

The librarian helped me use the computer and find information about prostate cancer at the National Cancer Institute's Cancer.gov Web site. I also got a list of drug companies that help cancer survivors pay for different kinds of medicines. We found information about how to deal with side effects of cancer treatment at Cancer Care's Web site, and what they call a computer bulletin board with messages from other men who have prostate cancer. I found a Web site for Us-Too, an organization that gives out information and support for men with prostate cancer. I also found the address for a prostate cancer resource center that is close to my home. I found some of this information in Spanish translations that helped me understand better. The librarian printed this information so that I could take it home with me. I went to the Resource Center and picked up some booklets about different kinds of treatment for prostate cancer. I got an appointment with a doctor who specializes in prostate cancer so that I could get a second opinion from an expert of what I should do. Since then, I have read all the information, thought about the doctors' advice, and I talked about things with my wife and son. I think I can now make a decision about my treatment.

[Narrator]

Antonio did a really good job of finding and using resources. He thought about, and made a list of the things he wanted to know. He did not just use one source of information: instead, he found several different places where he found accurate, up-to-date information. He thought that his English language skills might not be good enough for him to understand all of the information that was given to him, so he asked his adult son, whose first language is English, for help. He also found information in Spanish, which was easier for him to understand on his own.

[Narrator]

After hearing Antonio's story, take a few minutes to think about how you can use what Antonio learned about his cancer and the treatment options he had. Why not make a list of the resources that you could use and the people who you might be able to depend upon for help. Do you know what resources your local public library has to offer? Do you, or a family member or friend, have access to the Internet? Is there a bookstore in your community that sells cancer-related books? Is there a cancer information resource center in your town, or in the cancer treatment center? Is there a family member who can go to the doctors' appointments with you?

[Narrator]

You might not need to use your resource list right now, but some time in the future, your list of ideas might be really helpful, since there are important decisions to make all along the way. Now, let's hear from Lloyd, a retired Iowa farmer, who is 67 years old. Lloyd has just finished treatment for lung cancer. Because of his disease, and the kind of treatment he has had, Lloyd has a different set of information needs that he can share with you.

Lloyd, 67 years old

[Lloyd]

When I was diagnosed, I knew that lung cancer can be pretty bad. But I have also learned that maybe the treatment for my kind of cancer is much better now than it was even just a few years ago. My son is an oncology nurse – he specializes in taking care of people with cancer – people like me. So, I am lucky to have a close family member who is really an expert in cancer treatment. He helped me get the very latest information before I decided which treatment to have.

[Lloyd]

I've never been much at reading books, and I don't know anything about computers or this Internet I've heard about. I don't think I have ever been in the library downtown. So, my son helps me find information that I can understand. He has brought me booklets from the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society. My son does have a computer and he is very good at finding things that way. My son found a special lung cancer Web site on the Internet. In the free time that I have now, I have even started to learn to find things on the Internet myself.

[Lloyd]

My son introduced me to the dietitian at the cancer treatment center. She has really helped me with my diet, to find foods, and even recipes, that my wife can fix that I'll want to eat. I'm tired a lot, too. I now know that many people feel this way after cancer. The oncology nurse at the clinic and the physical therapist have helped me to re-think my daily routine – and I have begun to schedule my day in different ways to take advantage of my energy and let me rest when I need to.

[Lloyd]

Even though I have been handed a tough thing, at least with what I've learned, I feel like I have some control over my life again. I have made the decisions about my treatment. I know – or at least know that I can find out - what to expect. Somehow, knowing makes things easier.

[Narrator]

Lloyd's story is quite a bit different from Antonio's, isn't it? But it is interesting that both men seem to have a lot of hope – though they hope for different things. Lloyd knows his prognosis is not a good one, but he is hopeful that he will be comfortable, and that the quality of his life will continue to be good. Like Antonio, Lloyd is clear about the kinds of information he wants to find. He, too, is looking in several places for information: the Internet, his doctors, nurses, and social workers, and the information his son finds in various places. Now let's hear from another cancer survivor, Gloria, who is 47 years old. Gloria went from worrying about her cancer to regaining a sense of control over cancer through information.