

Managing Your Cancer Journey: The REDCAR Strategy



UHN

When you start to feel overwhelmed or worried about something, try to use the REDCAR Strategy to help you:

- manage the situation
- manage your emotions
- gain a feeling of control

The REDCAR Strategy starts by first letting you identify the reason for your frustration or emotion and then helps you create a solution to manage that emotion. Let's have a look at how the REDCAR Strategy may work for you.

Recognize

- Recognize that you are getting into a mood.
- For example, if you start to feel worried, concerned or angry, then say to yourself that you realize you are feeling worried, etc.

Examine

- Examine what started the mood. Was it an event or something someone said to you? If it's hard to examine what started the mood, ask yourself, "When was the last time I felt ok?"
- For example, this morning you know you felt fine but it was after seeing the doctor in the clinic this afternoon that you started to feel worried.

Diagnose

- Diagnose or pinpoint exactly what it was that put you into the mood.
- For example, it was after the doctor spoke to you about your test results that you started to really feel worried and you realized afterwards that you didn't understand what the doctor had said.

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Choose

- Look at the choices you have to deal with your emotion or mood and choose one.
- For example, your options may be to:
 - talk to a friend
 - try to reach the nurse at the clinic and speak to them
 - do nothing for now if it's the weekend since you won't be able to get a hold of anyone at the hospital

Act

- Act on the one choice of options you made.
- For example, since it's the weekend and you can't call anyone at the hospital to talk about your results, you will choose to do nothing until Monday when you'll try calling the nurse.
- In the meantime, choose not to worry about it and try to distract yourself by watching movies or visiting with friends.

Reinforce

- Think about what you did in response to your mood.
- For example, you told yourself that you won't worry this weekend and that you will leave a message for the nurse on Monday.
- If acting on your choice works for you, tell yourself you will try that approach again the next time you feel the same mood.