



What is **counseling**?

ask us

cancerFAMILYcare

provides **Strength for**
the Journey when
cancer strikes.

About Cancer Family Care

Since 1971, Cancer Family Care (CFC) has provided counseling, education, and emotional support to people affected by cancer. CFC offers four programs: The Center for Individual and Family Counseling, Treehouse Children's Services, The Coping Connection – Education and Outreach, and Tresses Wig Program.

Cancer Family Care seeks to help children and adults cope with the effects of a cancer-related illness or loss. CFC is known throughout Southwestern Ohio and Northern Kentucky as a force of compassion and strength in the face of cancer and bereavement.

What Good Will Counseling Do?

- **Counseling can help you find a better way to cope with the mental and emotional pain you feel when you or someone in your family is ill.**
- **Counseling is an active, collaborative process that can help you change. Counselors are receptive, non-judgmental listeners who help you work through your own problems.**
- **Counseling is therapy for the mind.**

Isn't Counseling Painful and Overwhelming?

Counseling sessions are designed to provide a safe environment for you to express difficult feelings.

Counselors are more than sympathetic listeners. They are trained to find the sources of personal problems and to identify solutions. Knowing what real options you have in a situation that feels out of control can greatly reduce your feelings of helplessness.

Are There Different Types of Therapists?

- ✦ Psychiatrists are physicians trained in psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. They are the only mental health practitioners who can prescribe medication.
- ✦ Psychoanalysts are trained in psychiatry, psychology, or social work and have had extensive supervised training at a psychoanalytic institute.
- ✦ Psychologists are licensed professionals with master's- or doctoral-level training and experience in psychotherapy, psychological testing, and research.
- ✦ Clinical social workers and professional counselors have a master's degree and are licensed and have experience in psychotherapy. At Cancer Family Care, the professionals are all master's-level social workers or counselors, licensed by Ohio or Kentucky, with special experience and training in oncology.

What Are Some Questions I Should Ask My Therapist?

- ✦ What is your training?
- ✦ Are you licensed by the state?

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- + To what professional organizations do you belong?
- + Do you follow a professional code of ethics?
- + What happens if we disagree about my goals for therapy?
- + What do you charge?
- + Will my insurance cover the counseling?
- + How long will each session be?
- + What length of time do you usually treat clients?

After you meet with the counselor, ask yourself: Do I feel safe and respected? Did the counselor understand me? Am I comfortable with the counselor's personal style and with the office atmosphere?

It's Hard Enough to Battle Cancer. How Can I Deal with Mixed Emotions?

Cancer affects three out of four American families, so psychosocial problems that relate to cancer are common.

Fear, depression, and anxiety are felt by many. Typical problems include adjustment to being ill, stress about finances or employment, and disruption of marriage and the family. Counselors can help with these issues and many more, such as grief and bereavement, sexuality, and body image.

Sometimes emotional reactions to cancer come from other factors in your life. For example, the sense of dread induced by certain medical procedures can be magnified by long-forgotten fears from your childhood. Your fear of becoming dependent on a spouse or children can be exaggerated by the memory of a family member's prolonged illness and the burden it imposed on the family.

Another reason coping with cancer can be especially difficult is the possibility that cancer entered your life at a time when you were already facing other major problems such as divorce, alcoholism, or a death in the family.

A counselor can help you find ways to manage your emotions and sort out problems, prioritize them, and formulate a plan for dealing with them in a constructive way.

Studies Show

- + "Mental health is fundamental to health... The efficacy of mental health treatments is well documented." *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General Department of HHS, 1999*
- + "...psychological support—whether in the forms of individual counseling, support groups or both—can become

"There have been times when I felt that I couldn't face another day, sometimes not even another hour. That is when the support and great concern from my counselor helped me to set goals and strive to overcome what I could."

– CFC Client

a significant ally in the fight against cancer." Stephanie Hittle, *Health Care Today*, September 2003.

- + 78% of Cancer Family Care's clients report improvement in their ability to manage the situation.

How Does Counseling Work?

Counseling works by drawing on the positive qualities that make any relationship work: acceptance, trust, consistency, and lively communication.

Counseling is a learning process based on the belief that, regardless of circumstances, each person or family has the potential to change.

Counselors are not like seamstresses or car mechanics who fix our problems while we sit in the waiting room. Counselors are more like real estate agents or financial planners who help us only if we work with them or invest something of ourselves in the problem-solving process.

A typical counseling session is not you lying on a couch, talking about your childhood. Rather, the typical counseling session occurs like this:

- + In the first visit, the counselor tries to get to know you. He/she may ask, "How did you find out you had cancer?"
- + Throughout an appointment, the counselor will help you see that your feelings are normal and are felt by many people. He/she may assure you, "You are not crazy. You're a normal person going through a very tough time."
- + The counselor will talk a lot about finding ways to help you and your family. The counselor is not there to take anything away from you.
- + With the counselor present, you may find it easier to talk to members of your family who are dealing with illness differently than you are.



Agency Partner

