

Care of the mind

Living well with illness Healthy mind

It is normal for people with life limiting illnesses to go through a huge range of intense and changeable emotions. This can range from the lows of sadness, grief, anger, resentment, guilt and fear to the highs of joy, gratitude, love, kindness and compassion. It is also normal to feel these highs and lows in quick succession and understandable considering the situation.

Are you fearful of what lies ahead? It is natural to respond with fear to serious illness as it threatens our very survival. Ordinarily we deal with threats by confronting them directly or escaping to safety. Life limiting illnesses cause us to feel a loss of control because they cannot be overcome or avoided. Despite this, we can control how we think about and respond to the challenges we face.

Are you focusing on what you can't control or change? Try putting your attention on things in your life that you can control and are important to you to reduce feelings of fear and helplessness. For example, transform your focus from sadness to appreciation of the time you have with your loved ones and gratitude for all they have given you. Prepare for the journey ahead by exploring your beliefs about death and what may lie beyond. If your fear is around what will happen to you or your family in the future take time to make necessary preparations.

You may already have been through difficult times in your life and found ways of restoring your mental wellbeing which will help you now. However, when you feel your level of distress is harmful or unhealthy, this is a sign you may not be coping and need support, either informal or formal. This may be when you feel overwhelmed, distressed over a long period of time, when it all feels too much to bear, when you feel helpless or when your emotions stop you from being able to function and do what you need to do.

Karuna also has experienced people you can talk with on:
07 3632 8300 or karuna@karuna.org.au



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