

Improving the Mental Health of Cancer Survivors: Mental Health Stigma with Audio Descriptive Transcript

Audio Descriptive Text

- Patient-Provider Communication: Improving the Mental Health of Cancer Survivors. National Association of Chronic Disease Directors. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Dr. Lynne Padgett introducing herself.
- Brock Lamont introduced.
- Dr. Lynne Padgett discussing about mental health issues experienced by cancer treatments.
- Dr. Lynne Padgett asking Brock Lamont about his experience sharing his concerns with his health providers.
- Brock Lamont discussing details about the mental health challenges when getting cancer diagnosis and treatment as well as the support he received from both his physician and his wife.
- Dr. Lynne Padgett confirming Brock Lamont's story.
- Brock Lamont asking Dr. Lynne Padgett how to get people unsure about sharing their mental health issues with their physicians and how providers can get start these conversations.
- Dr. Lynne Padgett encourages patients to discuss both mental and physical health issues with providers and for providers to enquire about mental health and factors that would prevent patients in sharing that information.
- Brock Lamont affirming the beneficial opportunity for doctors and nurses to improve the lives of cancer survivors.
- Dr. Lynne Padgett affirming that open communication between healthcare providers and patients regarding cancer related mental health concerns is an important part of care.
- Last slide showing the following links to the following websites–
 - CDC's Cancer Prevention and Control at www.cdc.gov/cancer.
 - National Association of Chronic Disease Directors at www.chronicdisease.org/.

Video Summary

Cancer survivor Brock Lamont shares his experience with talking about mental health issues with his health care providers with Dr. Lynne Padgett, a clinical health psychologist.

Audio Script

[Music]

[Dr. Lynne Padgett] Hello. I'm Dr. Lynne Padgett, and I'm a clinical health psychologist. I'm here with Brock Lamont who's a multiple myeloma cancer survivor.

Cancer survivors are often affected by mental health problems. But for some patients, talking about these challenges is more difficult than talking about physical health concerns. These are not always easy conversations for providers to start either. Cultural beliefs and worries about stigma, negative attitudes about mental health, these can all play a role in how difficult for these discussions can be.

Brock is going to tell us about his experience talking about his experience talking about mental health issues with his health care providers during, and after his cancer diagnosis and treatment. Thanks Brock for sharing your story with us.

[Brock Lamont] Thank you Dr. Padgett, it's great to be here.

[Dr. Lynne Padgett] Great. So, tell me, what was the experience of sharing your concerns about mental health with your providers, and how did those conversations go?

[Brock Lamont] It was a difficult experience, I have to be honest with you. I mean, cancer alone is hard to deal with, but also thinking about the mental health aspects of having this diagnosis and trying to deal with it, I think is very difficult and challenging as well.

For me, my journey started when I was having some back pains, and problems sleeping, and I was going... undergoing physical therapy. And the physical therapy just wasn't you know, taking care of the problem. So, we decided to do an MRI, we did the MRI, I normally would then go in and see a physician assistant and my physical therapist. It was a little bit different this time, I actually saw a physician, the lead of the practice, and he actually told me the radiologist when they read the MRI results thought that it looked like I had advanced prostate cancer.

[Dr. Lynne Padgett] Right.

[Brock Lamont] Which that was a very scary thing to hear, and it came like a thunderbolt, you know, out of the sky, you know, of the -- out of a clear, blue sky, and it was very challenging. And he actually reached out to an oncologist friend of his who was an excellent physician, someone I went to. We did some -- a further battery of testing, and that's when they determined I had multiple myeloma. I really appreciate the relationship I have with my primary oncologist, this is the individual I was referred to. And he made it really easy for me to be able to talk with him not just about my cancer diagnosis and the options that we had in dealing with this medically.

But also, the other things I need to be really thinking about, and that includes mental health. That includes, you know, the importance of maintaining a really positive attitude. I'm a firm believer in that, I think that's part of the whole aspect, the strategies that you have to use when you're facing a cancer diagnosis. And my oncologist was really good about speaking with me about that and giving me time to answer -- to ask questions, and he'd answer those questions, we had such a great rapport. And that was -- that made it easier to talk about these things. My wife also is -- she's a teacher now, but in a prior life she was a social worker.

[Dr. Lynne Padgett] Oh.

[Brock Lamont] And so, I spent a lot of time talking with her also about how we're going to fight this. And that includes, you know, some of the things that I'd be feeling. The anxiety, the depression, other things like that, and recognizing that and realizing that that's a normal thing. And that there's approaches, there's strategies that we could use to address that. And she really helped, you know, me prepare myself for these meetings, she was always in these meetings with me. And at always I think just about every meeting. We had a component of our conversation talking about just my general mental health, and what I was thinking about. And the natural things that you could be, you know, experiencing, and how to address those things. And I felt that was just so very important, and so very helpful for me.

[Dr. Lynne Padgett] Wow, that is a very compelling story.

[Brock Lamont] Thank you. So, Dr. Padgett, I have a question for you. What would you say to patients who are unsure about speaking about mental health issues with their providers? And what would you say to providers about how to get those conversations started?

[Dr. Lynne Padgett] Great. Thanks for asking. I tell patients that it's really important to realize their care is not just about their tumor or their cancer, but that it's whole person care. And whole person care is comprised of physical and mental health symptoms. It's important for them to report both of those symptoms, including

mental health to their providers. So, I would encourage them to tell their providers what they're experiencing. One way they can do that is through a process we call Distress Screening.

Where they may be in electronic form, perhaps on a piece of paper, they're invited to check a checklist of symptoms that include physical, social, and psychological needs. So, that's another way to report their symptoms to their provider. One thing that's really important for patients to know also is that this information, this mental health information they discuss with their provider is confidential. For providers, I would really encourage them to inquire about a patient's mental health, but also to recognize that cultural, religious, or personal beliefs may impact the patient's willingness to share. And that it may take multiple questions and some encouragement to really get a response from them. So, those are kind of the general recommendations for both patients and providers to initiate and have these conversations.

[Brock Lamont] Doctors and nurses have a real opportunity to reduce the impact of problems like these, and help cancer survivors like me live happy, healthier lives.

[Dr. Lynne Padgett] Open communication between healthcare providers and patients regarding cancer related mental health concerns is an important part of high quality care. Healthcare providers can make communication easier by assessing patients' cultural, social, or stigma related beliefs about mental healthcare first.

For access to healthcare provider training resources and information about the topics discussed, visit [cdc.gov/cancer](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer) and [chronicdisease dot org](https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease).