

# Benefits of Empowerment Across the Cancer Continuum

## Information for Clinicians

Patient empowerment can be described as feelings associated with being able to manage the challenges of having cancer and of having an increasingly positive sense of control of their individual situation.<sup>[1,2]</sup> Whether an individual is preventing, treating, managing, or surviving cancer, empowered individuals may better understand and participate in their care, engage with strategies for managing their cancer, and experience improved quality of life.<sup>[2]</sup>



### CANCER SCREENING

Screening can detect cancer at an earlier stage when it is generally more responsive to treatment. While there are clear recommendations related to cancer screening offered by various medical bodies (eg, National Comprehensive Cancer Network [NCCN], American Society of Clinical Oncology [ASCO®], US Preventive Services Task Force [USPSTF]), the decision on whether to follow them is completely up to the individual person.<sup>[3-5]</sup>

- Individuals who feel more in control and informed about their risk and/or disease are more likely to accept recommended cancer screenings and engage in shared decision-making with their healthcare provider(s)<sup>[2]</sup>
- Empowered people are more likely to actively seek out preventative measures on their own terms<sup>[2]</sup>



### DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT DECISIONS

People facing a cancer diagnosis must make a series of complex decisions that will have a lasting impact on their lives. However, this is generally a time when individuals are overwhelmed and anxiously trying to gather as much information as possible to understand what is happening in their body and what they should expect going forward.

- Empowerment can mean the ability to adjust faster to a cancer diagnosis, as well as develop a greater feeling of control during diagnosis and treatment<sup>[2,6]</sup>
- Empowered individuals are more likely to seek out information and support, and engage in shared decision-making with their healthcare team<sup>[2,6]</sup>



### TREATMENT

When undergoing treatment for cancer, patients are challenged with adverse events and complications that affect their physical, mental, and social well-being. They may have questions about their treatment, show interest in knowing whether clinical trials are available for their specific cancer, and be concerned about the impact of cancer on their daily living activities.

- Empowered individuals are more likely to be proactive about keeping their body and mind strong during treatment and are not afraid to reach out to their healthcare team for guidance<sup>[2,6]</sup>
- They are more likely to establish a strong support system and communicate with loved ones as needed throughout their journey<sup>[2,6]</sup>



### SURVIVORSHIP

Cancer survivors often contend with many challenges, including the long-term effects of both the cancer and its treatment. This includes knowing how to identify signs and symptoms of recurrence, re-establishing usual routines, and coping with anxiety and psychological distress associated with their disease.

- Empowered individuals are more likely to seek solutions and develop a cancer survivor care plan with their healthcare team to optimally manage their individual needs during survivorship<sup>[2,6]</sup>

**For more information and resources for you and your patients, visit [EmpoweredHealth.org](https://www.empoweredhealth.org)**



## References

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