



COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling services are offered at Wellness House to help cancer patients, families and caregivers navigate through the functional, emotional, and spiritual adjustment necessary to maintain their quality of life during their cancer journey.

A cancer diagnosis can mean distress for both patients and their families. The goal of our counseling services is to provide professional guidance around the many challenges posed by a cancer diagnosis. We provide assistance, information and support to patients and families during all phases of the cancer continuum. The services include:

- Adjustment to diagnosis and treatment
- Emotional support
- Coping techniques
- Crisis intervention and referral
- Grief and loss

Counseling services include short term individual counseling and multiple support groups for cancer patients, caregivers, and children from preschool to high school. These services are provided by a licensed psychologist, social worker, or counselor. All counseling records are maintained in a locked file cabinet.

SHORT-TERM INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

Short-term counseling is available to cancer patients or family members at Wellness House for the purpose of helping members identify and implement coping strategies during the cancer journey. Counseling provided at Wellness House does not include diagnosis or treatment of mental disorders.

The goals of short term counseling are to assess the individual's needs and to assist them in connecting to other Wellness House services and/or referral to other community resources for additional support. The services are rooted in a foundation that is about understanding and putting in place a set of goals and action items to help members manage the stress and changes that may come with cancer.

Principles of short-term counseling:

- Confidentiality
- Open communication
- Helps members deal with personal and family issues related to their cancer
- Focuses on the present and future
- Assesses problems and issues
- Develops insights and strategies
- Three to six individual sessions
- Referral to community resources

SUPPORT GROUPS

Support groups provide a time for participants to discuss their issues with others who have experienced similar events in an environment of support and assimilation. Members often report a sense of “belonging” and gain encouragement from other participants. Additionally, members are often able to provide support and direction for others in the group. Wellness House offers special group programs as well as drop-in support groups. Registration for our classes and support groups is requested for planning purposes.

The goal of support groups at Wellness House is to help cancer patients and their families take back control of their lives by exploring the emotional impact and day-to-day issues caused by the impact of cancer. Through guided and open discussions, groups explore ways for each person to handle the different issues that a cancer diagnosis brings. Each group focuses on improving the quality of life of every group member.

Principles of Support Groups:

Confidentiality:

- Anything said between two or more group members at any time is a part of the group and confidential.

Privacy:

- No group member is ever required to answer any question, to participate in any activity, or to tell anything. They have the right to pass, that is, the right to refuse. Members also may not pressure other members who have passed. The group leader is obliged to protect this right. However, members will benefit more from group the more they are able to take risks in sharing and participating.

Dignity:

- Each group member is treated with respect.

Attendance:

- For special group programs, members agree to attend every group meeting. If for some reason they cannot attend a session, they will notify the group leader.
- Entering a group session 15 minutes or more after the start time can be disruptive to the group. Please make every effort to arrive on time to all group meetings.

Responsibilities:

- It is the group leader’s responsibility to support these procedures and guidelines. The group may, when it wishes, propose other procedures and guidelines which will be up to the group to monitor.

Special Group Programs

In addition to drop-in groups, Wellness House offers special support group programs that follow a curriculum or lesson plan and meet at a specific time and date over a defined period of time. Special group programs include Paint Your Rainbow Summer Camp and special guest speakers from community. Register for these programs is required. If you are unable to attend, please notify Wellness House.



Informed Consent

Thank you for choosing the Wellness House of Annapolis. This informed consent document is intended to give you general information about our counseling services. Please read it carefully before signing. If you have any questions or would like a copy, please ask your counselor.

The Wellness House offers a variety of free services to its members including individual short-term counseling. Members may have up to six sessions of counseling. During the initial assessment, you and your counselor will work together to determine how Wellness House can best serve your needs. Wellness House does not provide on-going counseling, psychotherapy or medical services of any kind. If it is determined that other community resources would be helpful to you, appropriate referrals will be provided for your consideration. If you feel that you need more in-depth or longer term counseling, this should be discussed with your physician and they can help make appropriate medical referrals for you.

The Wellness House counseling program is staffed with Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors (LCPC) and Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW), as well as Licensed Graduate Professional Counselors (LGPC) working under supervision of our LCPCs or LCSWs. All hold advanced degrees, significant training, and additional certifications.

Sessions are 60 minutes long unless scheduled otherwise. If you need to cancel or reschedule, please call the Wellness House as soon as you are able.

If any of the following situations are brought to our attention, we are required to report these to the appropriate authorities:

- * When your counselor believes you pose a threat of harm to yourself or others
- * Instances of child sexual abuse
- * Instances of elder abuse

Wellness House does *not* provide emergency services. Counselors work varying schedules and are not available seven days a week. Messages left after business hours might not be received until the next scheduled workday. Should you experience a mental health crisis, please call 911, visit your local emergency room or contact the crisis center hotline at (410) 768-5522; they are available 24/7.

By placing your signature on the completed Counseling Intake Form, you are indicating that you have read and understand the above information and that any questions have been answered to your complete satisfaction. Your signature indicates that you agree with the conditions of counseling as stated herein.