Chief’s Note

Welcome to 2018!

To increase the understanding of the role of integrative medicine in cancer care, I joined a team of experts to define the term “integrative oncology.” We published this explanation in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute Monographs.

INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY

• Is a patient-centered, evidence informed field of cancer care that utilizes mind and body practices, natural products, and/or lifestyle modifications from different traditions alongside traditional cancer treatments.

• Aims to optimize health, quality of life, and clinical outcomes across the cancer care continuum and to empower people to prevent cancer and become active participants before, during, and beyond cancer treatment.¹

This is an exciting and essential step toward a better understanding of our emerging field. I hope that having a common language will lead to improved communication among patients, their families and caregivers, and healthcare providers as this area of cancer care advances.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy winter!

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About Integrative Medicine

A GUIDE TO SELF-CARE AND SUPPORT | WINTER 2018

Tune In to Our New Meditation Station

Our new Meditation Station has a collection of mindfulness practices written and recorded by our mind-body medicine team. Visit www.mskcc.org/meditation to listen on your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

You can enjoy these calming recordings throughout your day, whether you’re preparing for a doctor’s appointment or want help sleeping better at night. Check out these offerings and more:

RESTFUL NIGHT AHEAD
Get ready for bed by enjoying the relaxing sounds of acoustic guitar.

YOGA NIDRA
Experience a progressive full-body relaxation practice to help you sleep soundly.

BODY SCAN
Relax your body from head to toe before a big event or when you want to sleep.

MINDFUL WALKING
Purposefully pay attention to the feeling of your feet on the ground, the movement of your legs, and your surroundings.

Visit www.mskcc.org/meditation to get started today.

Staff Spotlight: Meet Our Creative Arts Therapy Interns

Each year we host and train graduate students in creative arts therapies. As we look toward National Creative Arts Therapy Week (March 11 to 17, 2018), we asked our three interns to share their experience studying music and dance therapy at MSK.

“In a medical setting there are times when people feel like they have lost a part of their identity. Music can transport people back to memorable times in their lives, enhance their mood, reduce feelings of anxiety, and help remind someone that they are more than their diagnoses.”

Hannah Hershman
Music Therapy, New York University

“Ai am continuing to learn the foundations of dance movement therapy and implementing the various elements in medical situations. When an individual is coping with an illness like cancer, supportive services such as dance movement therapy can truly provide comfort, and help with refocusing, normalization, and connectivity.”

Ashley Ervin
Dance/Movement Therapy, Pratt Institute

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Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

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Sleep and Chemo Brain

By Jodi MacLeod

Cancer survivors often find that trouble sleeping goes hand in hand with cognitive dysfunction, or “chemo brain.” This late effect of treatment can result in difficulties with short-term memory and mental tasks like reading, as well as not being able to think or understand as quickly.1 Chemo brain can appear up to six months after completing chemotherapy, a time when cancer survivors are hoping to return to a normal life. Insomnia can make these cognitive difficulties worse.

The good news is that for most cancer survivors, symptoms of chemo brain will diminish over time, and help is available for those whose daily lives are impacted.

Some ways to improve how you deal with mental tasks include organization strategies like making lists and relaxation techniques like meditation. A special type of cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia is an option as well.

For help with insomnia and cognitive changes, call 646-888-0845 to make an appointment for an integrative medicine consultation with one of our doctors.

Jodi MacLeod is a writer, patient advocate, and 13-year breast cancer survivor living in the Philadelphia area.


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The Integrative Medicine Service offers classes and self-care videos on yoga, tai chi, qigong, and meditation to help you discover the practice that is right for you. For our current class schedule and links to our video library, go to our website.