

NAVIGATING WORK & CANCER

Christine Brennan

Director of Programs, Cancer and Careers

This presentation is intended to provide general information on the topics presented. It is provided with the understanding that the author is not engaged in rendering any legal, medical, or professional services by its publication or distribution. Although this content was reviewed by a professional, it should not be used as a substitute for professional services. © Copyright 2017 Cancer and Careers

CANCER AND CAREERS

Cancer and Careers, founded in 2001, is a national nonprofit that empowers and educates people with cancer to thrive in their work environment, by providing expert advice, interactive tools and educational events. All programs and services provided to patients, survivors, healthcare professionals and caregivers are offered free of charge.

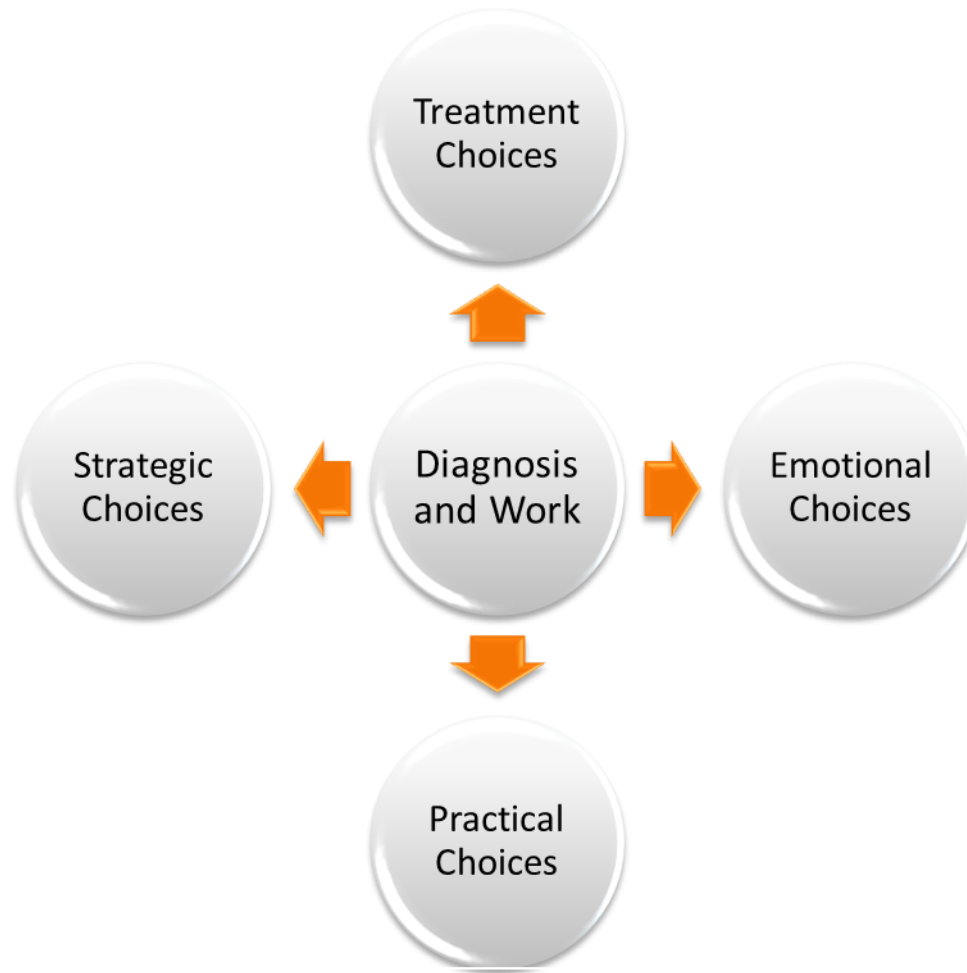
- CancerAndCareers.org
- Publications in English and Spanish
- Job Search Tools and Resume Review
- Professional Development Micro-Grants
- Accredited Programs for Healthcare Professionals
- CancerAndCareers.org/espanol
- Balancing Work & Cancer Webinars
- Community Events
- National and Regional Conferences
- Career Coaching

RESEARCH: WORKING THROUGH TREATMENT

- Top five reasons to continue working after a diagnosis:
 - Financial reasons (63%)
 - Feel well enough (51%)
 - Health insurance (40%)
 - Want things to feel normal (39%)
 - Feel productive and busy (31%)
- 65% of employed survivors surveyed reported that working during treatment helped them cope

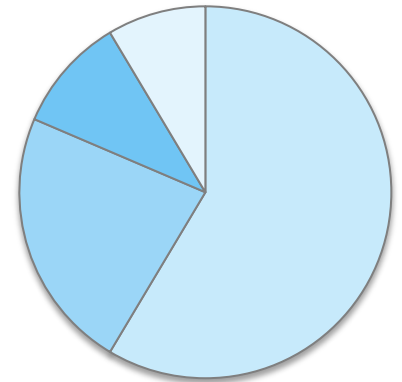
(Cancer and Careers/Harris Poll 2017)

DIAGNOSIS / WORK DILEMMA

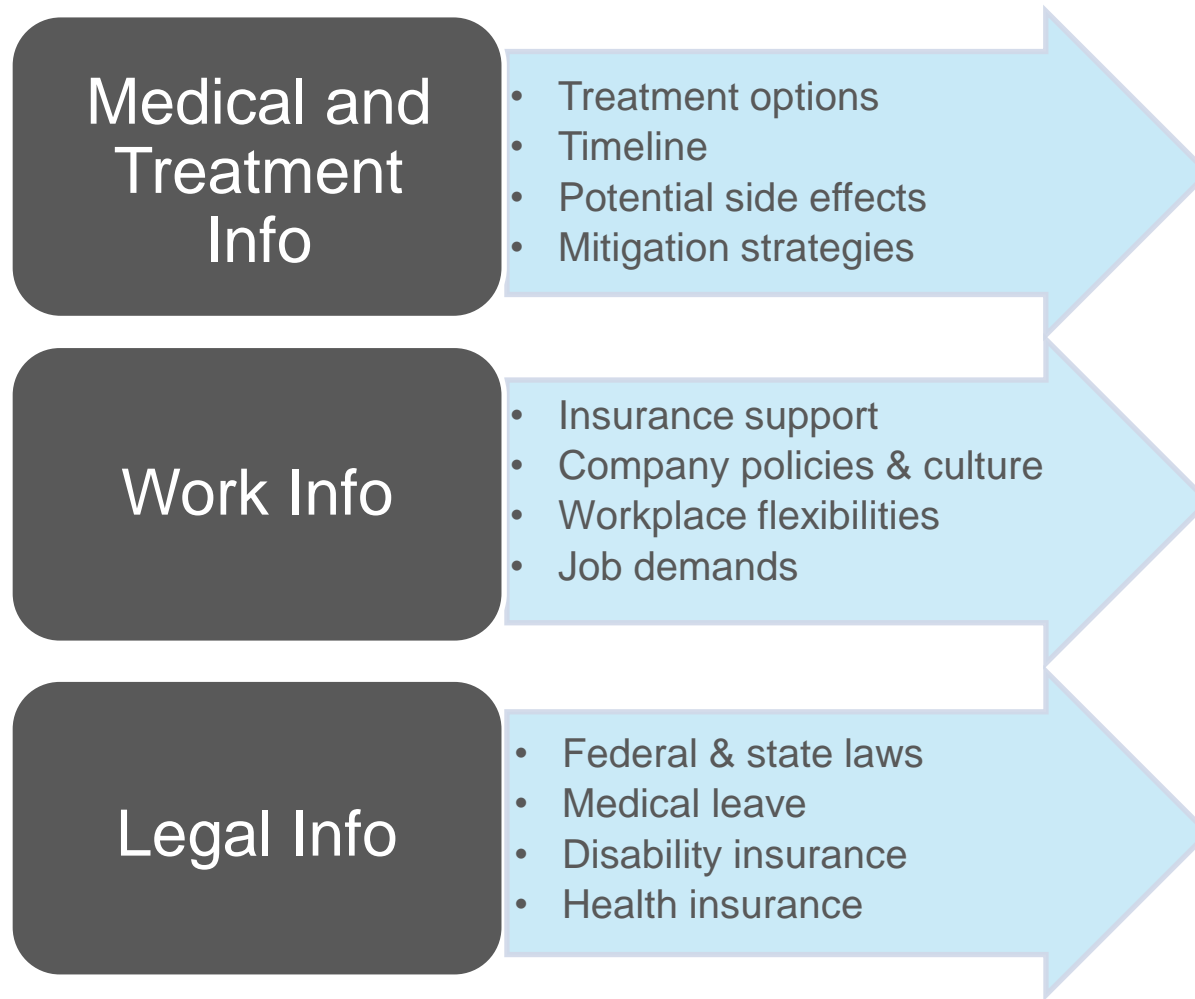


TO WORK OR NOT TO WORK?

- How will treatment affect work and schedule?
- What are job demands — physical and mental?
- How flexible is the work environment?
- Can accommodations be made?
- What are the financial and health insurance concerns?
- How is identity connected to work?
- Have work priorities changed?



INFORMATION NEEDS



KEY LAW: AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

To access the ADA:

- Your employer (or prospective employer) must be big enough that the ADA is applicable to them
- You must have the required skills, experience, degree, training, license, etc., to do the job
- Your disability must meet the criteria determined by the ADA

Benefits may include:

- Protection from discrimination
- Access to Reasonable Accommodations

More resources:

www.cancerandcareers.org/en/at-work/legal-and-financial

<http://trriagecancer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-ADA-Quick-Guide-Triage-Cancer.pdf>

DO I HAVE TO SHARE THE NEWS OF MY DIAGNOSIS AT WORK?

More resources:

www.cancerandcareers.org/en/at-work/where-to-start/sharing-the-news

<http://trriagecancer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Quick-Guide-to-Disclosure-FINAL.pdf>

ONLINE BRAND AND PRIVACY

- Social media usage
- Employers Google staff and candidates
- Employers accessing:
 - Email, voicemail, etc.
 - Search histories on company computers
- Disclosure decisions
- Long-term impact

SHARING A DIAGNOSIS AT WORK

Control the Message

- Should you tell?
- Whom should you tell?
- When should you tell?
- How much should you share?
- How should you share it?

**CAC Manager's Kit*

TREATMENT SIDE EFFECTS IN THE WORKPLACE

- Pain
- Hair loss
- Fatigue
- Weight changes
- Skin changes

MANAGING “CHEMO BRAIN” ON THE JOB — BACK TO BASICS

- Don't multi-task
- Write down a list of priorities
- Do one thing at a time
- Take notes
- Rehearse everything
- Build breaks into your day

STRATEGIES AT WORK: COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is key

- Ask for priorities
 - Create a written plan
- Know your limits and set boundaries
 - “I appreciate that you thought of me for this project, but I’m a bit swamped this week and am concerned about my ability to get this back to you in a timely manner.”
 - “Thank you for offering me these additional shifts. Unfortunately, I’m short on time at the moment as I’ve got some family obligations to attend to. But I’d love to talk about this possibility again in a few months, once the situation at home has settled down.”

STRATEGIES AT WORK: REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

- Modifications to your job, your schedule or the environment that you work in that make it possible for you to perform your essential duties
- Also available during the job-search process

More resources:

<https://askjan.org/index.html>

<http://tragecancer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Quick-Guide-to-ReasonableAccommodations.pdf>

MODIFYING WORK SPACE

- Identify challenges
- Manipulate work space
 - Phone, files within easy reach
 - Switching offices
 - Special furniture requests

MODIFYING SCHEDULE

Manipulate Work Schedule

- Working from home
- Part-time or full-time
- Flexible schedule
- Schedule breaks

WHAT ELSE MIGHT BE CONSIDERED
A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

RETURNING TO AN EXISTING JOB

- What kind of flexibility exists in your former job?
- Can you still do the work?
- Do you still want to do the work?
- What if they always see you as a person with cancer?

THE SWIVEL

My uncle had cancer . . .

- “I’m sorry to hear that, it must have been hard . . . (AND) . . . What did you think about the meeting that we had yesterday?”

How are you feeling?

- “Really excited to be back! In fact, I have a few questions about the new time-card system. Do you have a minute to answer them?”

DISCLOSURE & JOB SEARCH

Should you disclose your cancer history...

- On your resume?
- In your cover letter?
- During an interview?

THE SWIVEL

Can you tell me what you were doing during this gap on your resume?

- “I was dealing with a family issue that is resolved now AND I am thrilled to discuss how my management skills can build the team and grow your business.”
- “I realized that what I was doing didn’t fulfill me, so I took a step back to think about what would make me happy AND I think my tech background would really be an asset not just for this role but for the company as a whole.”

More resources:

www.cancerandcareers.org/en/looking-for-work/interviewing/mock-interviews

MORE SWIVELING

I noticed on your resume that you have done a lot of volunteering in the cancer community. Do you have cancer?

- “Like most people, I’ve been touched by cancer, and finding a way to give back is very important to me. Plus, all my volunteer work has given me the opportunity to develop some valuable skills that I think would be applicable here, including X, Y, Z.”

When I Googled your name, an interview you gave about being diagnosed with cancer was one of the top results. Are you still in treatment?

- “Thank you for taking so much interest in me. The opportunity to speak to the press gave me some incredible new skills that I think would be very relevant to this role, including X,Y, Z.”

WORKING IN A NEW JOB WITH A NEW EMPLOYER

- How do you assimilate?
- How do you handle it if you are still in treatment?
- Managing your energy
- How can you succeed?
- Asking for accommodations

TIPS FOR COLLEAGUES

COMMUNICATIONS: WHAT TO SAY

- “I am sorry this is happening to you.”
- “I don’t know what to say or how to say it, but I do want you to know I am here for you.”
- “I am thinking of you.”
- “How are you feeling today?”
- “May I email you?”
- “Wasn’t that a productive meeting?”

COMMUNICATIONS: WHAT NOT TO SAY

- “I know how you feel.”
- “My brother had this kind of cancer and he was in the hospital for months.”
- “I know this will turn out OK.”
- “The same thing happened to my neighbor, and it worked out fine.”
- “Did you drink?” or “Do you smoke?” or “Do you tan?”

Remember: Don't let talk about the cancer dominate every conversation.

HOW TO HELP

If you are inclined to help, be specific with your offers:

- “I would like to bring you lunch each day next week; is that ok?”
 - Be sure to ask what kinds of food he/she is able to eat.
- “I have heard some people in the office talk about setting up a fundraiser for you. Before we proceed, I want to know if you are comfortable with that?”
 - Be sure to confirm whether your colleague would want his/her name tied to it, especially if it’s going to be done online.
- “I saw that next week you are supposed to organize the staff meeting, I’d be happy to take care of that for you. Is there anything I need to know to make it a success?”
 - The idea is to identify work-related projects or tasks that you can pitch in with while still respecting your coworker’s ability to do his/her job.

TIPS FOR MANAGERS

WHAT INFORMATION CAN I PROVIDE TO HELP AN EMPLOYEE?

- Information on company policy
 - Medical leave policy
 - Short-term and long-term disability
 - Health insurance
 - Flexible work policy (if applicable)
 - PTO, leave banks (if applicable)
- Introductions to EAPs/insurance providers
- Cancer and Careers

WHAT ARE SOME GOOD COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES?

- Identify a point person
- Create a written plan
- Have regular email wrap-ups or phone calls
- Use online document-sharing programs
- Keep employee visible

WORKPLACE TRANSITIONS FOR PEOPLE TOUCHED BY CANCER

Free eToolkit for Employers

- Program developed by Cancer and Careers, The U.S. Business Leadership Network, Pfizer, Anthem and SEDL (a nonprofit research firm)
- Piloted by Ernst & Young, Merck, North American Mission Board, Northrop Grumman, Verizon and Anthem
 - 93% (n=43) of managers reported finding this resource helpful, especially in helping them provide employees with emotional support
 - 86% (n=44) of managers reported finding this resource easy to access and use
- Available via www.workplacetransitions.org

MORE FROM CAC

Resume Review Service

www.cancerandcareers.org/resume_reviews/new

Webinar: Body Confidence, Self-Confidence in the Workplace –
12/13

www.cancerandcareers.org/en/community/events/webinar-confidence

Free Publications

www.cancerandcareers.org/publication_orders/new

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Triage Cancer

- Educational Blog <http://TriageCancer.org/Blog>
- Events <http://TriageCancer.org/Events-Calendar>
- Cancer Survivorship Webinar Series <http://TriageCancer.org/Webinars>
- State Resources <http://TriageCancer.org/Resources/StateResources>
 - Quick Guides
 - State Resource Contact Information

Employment Rights & Options

- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission www.EEOC.gov
- Job Accommodation Network www.AskJan.org
- U.S. Department of Labor (COBRA) www.dol.gov/EBSA
- U.S. Department of Labor (FMLA) www.DOL.gov/WHD
- FlexJobs www.flexjobs.com
- Workplace Transitions www.workplacetransitions.org

Legal Assistance

- National Cancer Legal Services Network www.NCLSN.org
- LawHelp www.lawhelp.org
- Lawyer Referral Service
<http://apps.americanbar.org/legalservices/lris/directory>

CONTACT INFORMATION

Chrissy Brennan

cbrennan@CEW.org

www.CancerandCareers.org

Twitter

[@CancerAndCareer](https://twitter.com/CancerAndCareer)

Facebook

www.Facebook.com/CancerandCareers

Newsletter

www.cancerandcareers.org/en/community/newsletter