

[TRACK 2: INTRODUCTION]

Narrator: Robert O’Gorman

[Narrator]

Feeling that you are being forced to learn new ways of coping can put an extra burden on you. It might seem at first that you won't learn the skills in time to be able to deal with a new crisis. You might even feel that you would have made different choices now than you did in the past if you had had all of the facts, or if you had learned or understood something earlier about your illness or treatment.

[Narrator]

The overall goal of the Cancer Survival Toolbox and the programs it contains is to help you learn basic survival skills that can help you deal with your cancer diagnosis and treatment. One of the first things to learn from this program is this: *from the time of diagnosis and for the balance of life, a person living with cancer is a survivor*. These programs will review important self-advocacy skills -- that is, ways to help you stand up for yourself -- so that you can make the quality of your life after cancer diagnosis as good as possible.

[Narrator]

In this series of programs, we will work on learning the six basic skills that health-care professionals and cancer survivorship groups have found are essential to self-advocacy: communication skills, new ways to find the information you need, making decisions, solving problems in new ways, negotiating skills to help you get what you need, and ways that you can stand up for your own rights. The Toolbox also contains programs on special topics like “Finding Ways to Pay for Care” and “Living Beyond Cancer,” as well as programs on different types of cancers. These provide more specific information on topics that may be of interest to you.

[Narrator]

You may choose to listen to these programs in order, or you may choose to cover only certain topics. You can also listen to or read the programs on the Cancer Survival Toolbox web site at www.canceradvocacy.org/toolbox, or download the audio files from iTunes. You may find it useful to listen to some of the programs more than once to refresh your memory on specific skills. [Many people find it helpful to follow along with written material while listening to each program. If you would like a program transcript, please visit the toolbox website at www.cancersurvivaltoolbox.org to print each section.] While these programs have been designed to assist those of you who have recently been diagnosed, they will also help anyone at any stage of illness who is facing hard decisions and changes in their lives. Family members and caregivers can also use this Toolbox on behalf of a child or anyone else in their care.

[Narrator]

The Cancer Survival Toolbox comes with a free resource booklet that is also available at www.canceradvocacy.org/toolbox. This booklet lists many useful resources and organizations related to each Toolbox topic..

[Narrator]

Now, let's begin with the program entitled “Communicating.” The goal of this program is to help you talk with others about your cancer in such a way that you gain the information you need and make sure other people understand your needs and wishes. Let's listen to Linda, an oncology social worker who works with cancer survivors, to find out why she thinks good communication is so important.