

## [TRACK 1: INTRODUCTION]

[Tom]

Just when I think I have one problem beat, another problem jumps up at me. So, I tell my doctor that I'm going to need some time to think about this.

[Ellen]

The one problem I had right away was how to tell my family, friends, and co-workers about my cancer? But, my bigger problem was figuring out how I would be able to take care of my girls if I have to stop working or work less during my chemotherapy.

[Evelina]

After my diagnosis, I wanted to go home to the Philippines and start my faith healing, not this chemotherapy.

[Tom]

We considered each option on its own and talked about how it could affect us and our families, and the other parts of our plan.

[Ellen]

I wrote down a whole list of questions for my doctor, like: How would chemotherapy help me? What would happen if I decided not to have it? How often would my treatments be scheduled? Where would I have to go to get my treatments?

[Evelina]

Over the next few weeks, I realized that I wasn't going to die from my cancer soon. I started to feel less afraid of chemotherapy. I was ready to talk about the best treatments for me.

[Narrator]

Today we have more -- and better -- treatments for cancer than ever before. These treatments often result in cure or longer life. At the same time, cancer care has become more complicated and therefore more confusing for the people who are living with cancer, whom we call cancer survivors. Cancer treatment can put a lot of physical, emotional, and social demands on the survivor. That means that cancer survivors must develop and use their problem solving skills.

[Narrator]

Almost every study of cancer survivors shows that people who have the tools to solve their unique problems report more feelings of success, better quality of life, and more sense of control over their lives and treatment. The problems they face include coping with therapy, managing home, work, and treatment, maintaining a good outlook on life, planning for the future, and so forth. To move forward with your life after cancer requires you to solve these kinds of problems. In order to do that, you must have the tools to perform your tasks and reach your goals.

[Narrator]

Welcome to the Cancer Survival Toolbox program entitled "Solving Problems." After listening to this program and working through the exercise, you will be better able to:

- Understand the importance of problem solving in surviving cancer;
- Identify problem solving skills you need when faced with a cancer diagnosis; and
- Learn the steps for making a problem-solving plan.

“Solving Problems” is just one of a series of Cancer Survival Toolbox programs designed to help you learn the basic skills essential to self-advocacy. There are also programs on communicating, finding information, making decisions, negotiating, and ways to stand up for your rights. In addition, there are programs on special topics like finding ways to pay for care and living beyond cancer, as well as programs on different types of cancers. You can listen to or read these programs online at [www.canceradvocacy.org/toolbox](http://www.canceradvocacy.org/toolbox); you can also download the audio files from iTunes.

The Cancer Survival Toolbox comes with a free Resource Booklet, also available at [www.canceradvocacy.org/toolbox](http://www.canceradvocacy.org/toolbox). Resources and organizations related to each Cancer Survival Toolbox topic are included.

Now, let's talk more about the topic of this program, solving problems.

[Narrator]

Each day, we all face various problems -- some small and easily worked out, and others much bigger problems that require more thinking to solve. The problem-solving process is the way you think in order to solve a puzzle or problem. The five most common steps in the problem-solving process are:

1. Say what the problem is;
2. Get the facts that are related to the problem;
3. Create a plan and think it through carefully;
4. Carry out your plan; and
5. Check your plan as you go along and adjust it as needed.

[Narrator]

This process assumes that we want to play an active role in shaping our own lives, that we want to have control in our lives, and that, given the right skills or tools, we can. It's also important to realize that you might make a mistake now and then in trying to solve a problem. These mistakes might affect your ability to cope with the situation or solve a specific problem. That's OK -- you can follow the problem-solving steps to correct those mistakes. Let's discuss the five steps in more detail with help from Linda, an oncology social worker. Step 1: Say what the problem is.