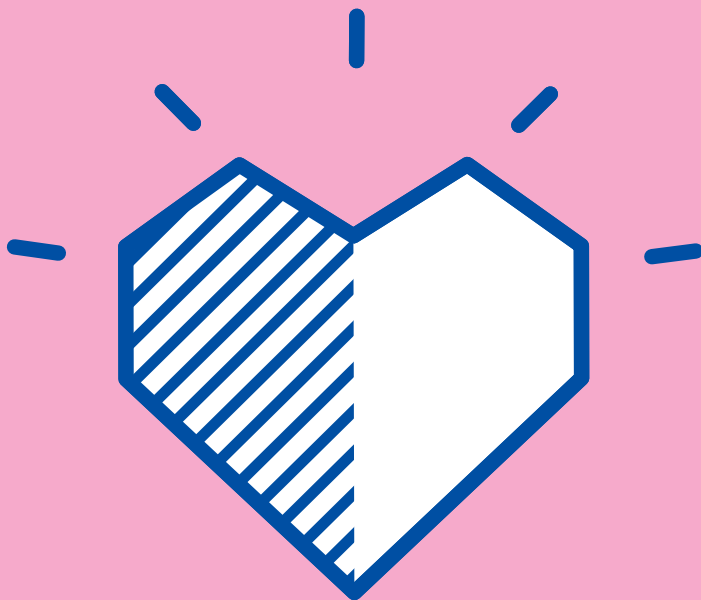


**WORLD  
CANCER  
DAY 2016**

**I CAN**



**LOVE, AND BE LOVED**

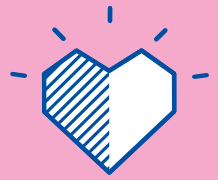


**ON 4 FEB**

**#WeCanICan  
#WorldCancerDay**

**WWW.WORLDCANCERDAY.ORG**

# I CAN — LOVE, AND BE LOVED



## **Cancer and its treatment can place strain on relationships, with both the person living with cancer and their partner facing challenges around communication, intimacy and sexual wellbeing.**

Cancer touches everyone in a patient's life in a different way. Partners may be especially affected and experience feelings of anger, frustration and anxiety<sup>1,3</sup>. They may also be adjusting to changes in their role and responsibilities as the primary caregiver, all of which can lead to strain on a relationship. While there is no 'right way' for a cancer patient and their partner to cope with cancer, there are things that couples can do to support each other through this challenging time<sup>1</sup>. For example, keeping the lines of communication open and taking time to talk about feelings and difficult topics such as a fear of recurrence or financial concerns can be helpful in dealing with the emotional impacts<sup>4</sup>. Some couples may also benefit from talking with a counsellor or others who have been through their own cancer journey.

For many, one of the longest lasting, and most devastating consequences of a cancer diagnosis is the impact on sexual health and wellbeing<sup>5</sup>. Both men and women can experience changes to sexual function and sexuality after cancer treatment<sup>6</sup>. For example,

men may experience physical changes to their sexuality arising from nerve damage as a result of some surgery or radiotherapy for prostate cancer. Changes may also be associated with side effects of treatment such as fatigue, pain and weight gain, which can contribute to distress and negative emotional responses and lead to feelings of sexual unattractiveness. Seeking information and assistance from health professionals and cancer support services can help cancer patients to adjust to changes in sexual function and help couples to renegotiate sex and intimacy.

**WORKING TOGETHER THROUGH THE CHALLENGES OF CANCER AND ITS TREATMENT CAN HELP PEOPLE LIVING WITH CANCER AND THEIR PARTNERS CONTINUE A CLOSE AND LOVING RELATIONSHIP.**

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