



# BALANCING WORK & CANCER

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# CANCER AND CAREERS

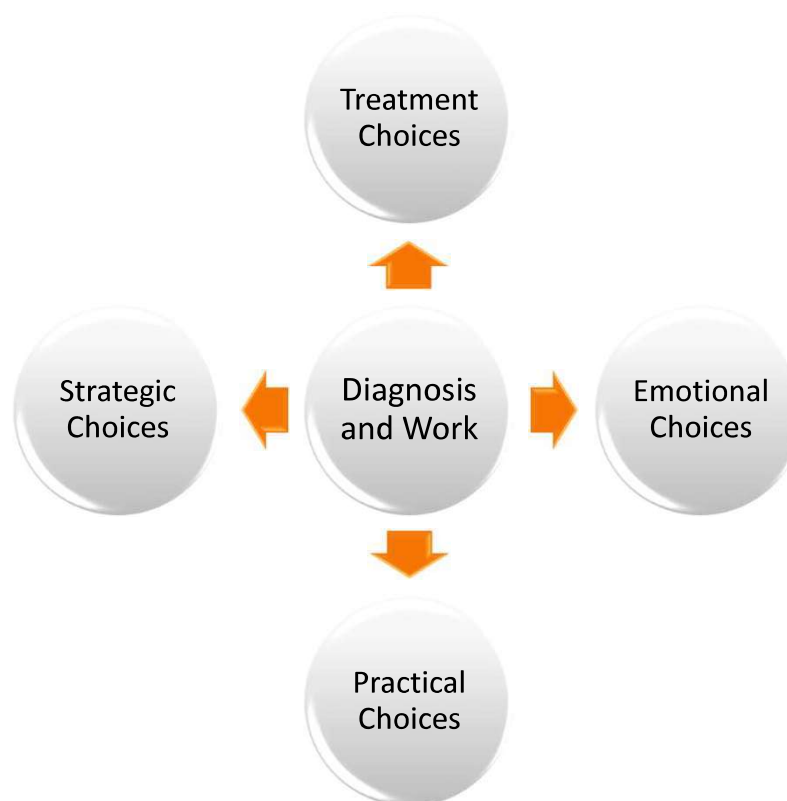
## FOUNDED 2001

Mission: Cancer and Careers empowers and educates people with cancer to thrive in their work environment by providing expert advice, interactive tools and educational events to patients, survivors and caregivers.

The organization also provides guidance and training for healthcare providers, HR professionals, employers and managers.

Vision: to eliminate fear and uncertainty for working people with cancer

# DIAGNOSIS/WORK DILEMMA



# INFORMATION NEEDS

## Medical and Treatment Info

- Treatment Options
- Timeline
- Potential Side Effects
- Mitigation Strategies

## Work Info

- Insurance Support
- Company Policies & Culture
- Workplace Flexibilities
- Job Demands

## Legal Info

- Federal & State Laws
- Medical Leave
- Disability Insurance
- Health Insurance

# 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:

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

<http://www.cancerandcareers.org/en/at-work/legal-and-financial>

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

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YOU MAY BE  
FURTHER  
PROTECTED BY  
A STATE FAIR  
EMPLOYMENT  
LAW

# YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

It's a good idea to review privacy policies before sharing personal info on any website

- Develop a disclosure plan
  - Deliberately decide what & where to share
  - Consider impact, now & in the future
  - Communicate preferences to your family, friends and anyone else you choose to disclose to
- Monitor what others post about you

# DISCLOSURE IS A SPECTRUM

- Whether to disclose is a personal decision
  - How do you feel about privacy?
  - What benefits or legal protections might be available if you disclose? And, how much information is necessary to access them?
- The amount you disclose may evolve, but that doesn't mean it ever has to be every detail
  - Remember you can always choose to share more, but it is not possible to “un-share”
- Consider timing—and circumstance—before starting a conversation
  - Are you working during treatment and/or recovery?
  - Are you looking for a new job?



# MAKING DISCLOSURE DECISIONS

- Deliberately decide what & where to share
  - Consider impact, now & in the future
- Communicate preferences to your family, friends and anyone else you choose to disclose to
  - Monitor what others post about you online
- Consider how you present any cancer community involvement online, on resumes, etc.

# DISCLOSURE & JOB SEARCH

- Should you disclose your cancer history...
  - on your resume?
  - in your cover letter?
  - during an interview?

# 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

“Chemo Brain” one sheet:

[https://www.cancerandcareers.org/publication\\_orders/new](https://www.cancerandcareers.org/publication_orders/new)

# STRATEGIES AT WORK: REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

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

More resources:

- <https://www.cancerandcareers.org/en/at-work/legal-and-financial/requesting-reasonable-accommodations>
- <https://askjan.org/index.html>

# STRATEGIES AT WORK: COMMUNICAIONS

- Identify a point person
- 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.”

# COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: 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?"*

# LOOKING FOR WORK

- Things to think about:
  - Emotional highs/lows
  - Being strategic
  - Holding yourself to a higher standard
- The steps of a job search are the same as the steps to build any relationship—consider what you reveal, and when.

More resources – Job Search Toolkit:

[http://www.cancerandcareers.org/publication\\_orders/new](http://www.cancerandcareers.org/publication_orders/new)

# NETWORKING

- 85% of jobs are found through networking
- Networking sources:
  - Websites such as LinkedIn
    - Write a compelling profile; include photo
    - Ask for substantive recommendations
    - #BeSpecific
    - Post status updates regularly
    - Join “groups” and participate actively
  - Former colleagues and vendors
  - Friends, neighbors, fellow volunteers, members of support groups or faith communities
  - Professional associations
  - Doctors, lawyers, dentists, accountants, dog walkers

More resources: <https://www.cancerandcareers.org/en/looking-for-work/networking>

# RESUME DOS & DON'TS



**DO** incorporate keywords for tracking software



**DO** write measurable achievements



**DO** include a short summary



**DO** use active words (created, increased...)



**DO** list volunteer work



**DON'T** include cliché's (go-getter, team-player...)



**DON'T** write more than two pages



**DON'T** use elaborate fonts, designs or images



**DON'T** highlight gaps by including months



**DON'T** forget to proof-read

# COVER LETTER DOS & DON'TS



**DO** include a cover letter, even if it is optional



**DO** mention specifics about your interest in the company



**DO** highlight your experience that aligns with the job description



**DON'T** copy exactly what is on your resume



**DON'T** use a form letter



**DON'T** forget to proof-read

# INTERVIEW DOS & DON'TS



**DO** research the interviewer & the company



**DO** practice your Swivels in advance



**DO** focus on your qualifications for the job



**DO** ask for clarification, if needed



**DON'T** feel obligated to disclose your diagnosis



**DON'T** forget you are interviewing the company as well



**DON'T** be vague, answer with specific examples of your experience



**DON'T** leave without asking for next steps

# 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

# CAC CONFERENCES



## Midwest Conference on Work & Cancer\*

March 27, 2026 | 9:00 AM CT – 4:00 PM CT

<http://www.cancerandcareers.org/en/midwest>

*\*Applications for the Midwest Conference Technology Assistance Program open now!*

## National Conference on Work & Cancer

June 26, 2026 | Virtual

## West Coast Conference on Work & Cancer

October 17, 2026 | Virtual

# UPCOMING VIRTUAL EVENTS



## Managing Long-Term Stress

January 21 | 1:00 PM ET/10:00 AM PT

## Balancing Work & Cancer

February 4 | 1:00 PM ET/10:00 AM PT

## First Impressions: Resumes and LinkedIn

April 1 | 6:00 PM ET/3:00 PM PT

For more info & to register, visit: <https://www.cancerandcareers.org/en/community/events>

# BALANCEAR EL TRABAJO Y EL CÁNCER EN ESPAÑOL

Balancear el trabajo y el cáncer (Balancing Work & Cancer)

March 11 | 1:00 PM ET/10:00 AM PT

Búsqueda de empleo (Job Search)

June 3 | 1:00 PM ET/10:00 AM PT

Balancear el trabajo y la salud mental (Balancing Work & Mental Health)

September 16 | 6:00 PM ET/3:00 PM PT

Balancear el trabajo y el cuidado (Balancing Work & Caregiving)

December 2 | 6:00 PM ET/3:00 PM PT

For more info & to register, visit: [www.cancerandcareers.org/es/recursos/btc](http://www.cancerandcareers.org/es/recursos/btc)

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# CONTACT

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