



# Finding Help for Anxiety and Depression

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**Andrew Schorr:**

Anxiety and depression. So what about getting help for that? Some people think, oh my God, it's a mental illness. And I'm not going there. And that's not me. But yet, they've been hit with a ton of bricks, they or a family member, about getting help. Now, some of it, you heard Dr. La Verne does tai chi and all that, and that's a therapy for her. So how do you help people get to a better place?

**Dr. Szabo:**

Well, I think one of the biggest things to realize is that, as you go on this journey, the diagnosis is the first step. And we know from diagnosis time, there's about a 30 percent chance that you're going to struggle with anxiety or depression that's debilitating along the journey. There's that 70 percent that it may not be debilitating or severely distressing, but it impacts your life, your work, your family, your personal relationships, your joy.

And that's all as valid as the significant distress. And so life is hard. This is another part of the life journey that nobody looks forward to, nobody expects, and nobody understands. And with CLL, it's almost a different population as well, because you have a journey of this watch and wait. And then you have the journey of treatment. And you see this instance of anxiety or depression come and go through that process. And what we know through evidence now is that there's actually no difference between the level of anxiety or depression depending on where you are in this journey—whether you're in the watch and wait or whether you're in the treatment phase.

What we do know is we see a higher incidence of anxiety during the watch and wait and a higher incidence of depression during treatment and remission actually. And there's something interesting that I've found through my career is working with the more chronic populations of cancer. We think that the hardest time is diagnosis and treatment.

And it surely is. But what we don't realize is that when the treatment is over, and you're just going back and having an appointment as a checkup, all of that support kind of dwindles away. And you've moved forward in your life and so has everybody else. And that can be just as difficult in a mild, moderate or significant level for people. And so keeping in tune with yourself, if you never thought you'd see a psychologist, you don't need to think of it as a pathology base. You're not seeing a psychologist because of a mental illness.

You're seeing a psychologist, because you have cancer. And that's okay. It is not a diagnosis, and it's not pathological.

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