

Inside Integrative Medicine

May 2024

**Integrative
Medicine
Virtual Group
Classes**

Healing Through Writing: An Expressive Writing Support Group

by Melanie Cavazos, MSSW, LCSW

Many people who are diagnosed with cancer may experience emotional distress. Their loved ones and caregivers can also experience emotional distress. This distress can be impacted by physical symptoms of the disease, side effects from treatment, financial impact of cancer, and other life stressors. Additionally, distress can impact the way a person copes with their diagnosis, makes decisions about their medical care, and can affect their interpersonal relationships. There are many effective ways for someone to manage their distress including individual counseling, meditation, journaling, and joining a support group.

Why Join a Support Group?

Oncology support groups provide a unique opportunity for patients and caregivers to both provide and receive support from their peers. A common cause of distress is feeling isolated and alone due to their disease. Attending a cancer support group helps patients and caregivers identify with others in similar circumstances. They can share their experiences and learn from others. The comradery from a support group can be vital to emotional well-being.

What is Expressive Writing?

Expressive writing is different than journaling which is a common practice to improve coping in patients with cancer and their caregivers. Typically, expressive writing is structured and focused. Participants write for 10-15 minutes a day for 4 days on their deepest thoughts, feelings and experiences. Research has shown that expressive writing provides long-term improvements in mood.

Overview of the Group

Participants in the group will receive a writing prompt and instructions after registration. You will be asked to spend 10-15 minutes a day for 4 days writing in response to the prompt. Participants will then attend a 60 minute virtual support group in which 20 minutes will be spent allowing participants to share excerpts from their writing and the remaining 40 minutes processing any emotional responses. By combining the elements of expressive writing and a support group, we hope you will experience a positive impact on your mood and coping skills. Healing Through Writing class does not require a referral.

Please contact the Integrative Medicine Center at 832-750-3685 to register for the Healing Through Writing class.



Integrative Oncology Consultation

Our physicians can give guidance on achieving a comprehensive and integrative approach to your cancer care.

Exercise/Physical Activity Consultation

A senior physical therapist provides recommendations on achieving safe and optimal exercise during each consultation.

Oncology Acupuncture Treatment

Acupuncture is a safe and often effective medical treatment that can be used to manage side effects from cancer and related treatments, including nausea and vomiting, pain, neuropathy, hot flashes, fatigue and dry mouth. Cost: \$80 per treatment.

Oncology Massage Treatment

Oncology massage may help patients address anxiety, relieve pain, decrease fatigue and improve sleep quality. Treatments are \$55.

*Prices for IMC services may be subject to change depending on insurance coverage.

View audio and video resources online: www.mdanderson.org/integrativemedcenter

Health Psychology Consultation

A licensed clinical psychologist will provide both evaluation and interventions to help with lifestyle change and address symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression.

Yoga Therapy Consultation

Yoga therapy lowers stress, depression, and anxiety, improves sleep, memory, physical functioning, and overall quality of life, as well as increasing spiritual well-being. A yoga therapist would provide interventions. Cost: \$50 per session.

Nutrition Consultation

A registered dietitian provides personalized nutrition counseling and education to help patients manage side effects and reach their goals during and after cancer treatment. Education emphasizes a whole food, plant-based diet for optimal health.

Music Therapy

Individual music therapy is provided by a board-certified music therapist (MT-BC) and involves engaging in music interactively in a variety of ways, with outcomes including anxiety reduction, fostered well-being and exploring ways of reconnecting to music for daily quality of life. Cost: \$50 per session.

How to Register for our Virtual Group Classes:

1. Call the Integrative Medicine Center at 832-750-3685.
2. All classes are free.
3. Complete e-update *liability waiver and telemedicine consent in MyChart at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled class.

Note: All classes are open to both patients and caregivers.

May 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Yoga for Health 10:30-11:30	Yoga Nidra 10:00-11:00 2nd Tues.	Yoga for Health 10:30-11:30	No Classes	Yoga for Health 10:30-11:30
Connect & Reflect with Music 1:30-2:30	5:00 - 6:00 4th Tues. Pranayama/Breathing 10:00-11:00 1st & 3rd Tues.	Healing Through Writing 2:00-3:00 2nd Wed.		

Group Class Descriptions:

Yoga for Health: Features a gentle form of yoga, including stretching, breathing, relaxation, and meditation techniques. No prior yoga experience is required.

Yoga Nidra/Meditative Relaxation: This is a guided meditation in the supine position to bring you into a state of deep restful awareness.

Healing Through Writing: Using expressive writing as a tool to identify and process difficult emotions in a supportive environment.

Pranayama/Breathing: The practice of Pranayama involves breath regulation through various breathing exercises.

Connect & Reflect with Music: A interactive and supportive music group, led by a Board-Certified Music Therapist, using music engagement and conversation to enhance well-being and encourage connectedness. No music experience is required.

Black Bean Mango Salsa Bowl

Total Time: 25 minutes, Servings: 3

Website: <https://plantbasedrdblog.com/2023/05/black-bean-mango-salsa-bowl/>

Ingredients:

- 1 tsp white miso paste
- 1 clove garlic, grated
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, grated
- 2 tsp maple syrup
- 2 tsp chili oil or sesame oil
- 1/2 tsp Tajin or chili lime seasoning
- Juice and zest of 1 lime
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced with whites and green portions separated
- 1, 15 oz canned black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 ataulfo mangos, cubed
- 1 red bell pepper, finely diced
- 1 jalapeno, finely diced (optional)
- 1 medium avocado, cubed
- 1/4 cup cilantro, minced
- Salt to taste
- add in additional pomegranates as a topping

For serving, can be optional

- 2 cups cooked leftover Jasmine rice or frozen rice
- 2-3 tbsp canned full fat coconut milk or 1-2 frozen coconut milk cubes (1 pour canned full fat coconut milk into an [ice cube tray](#))
- 1 tsp maple syrup, optional
- 1/4 cup cilantro, minced
- 1/4 cup pepitas



Instructions:

1. To a large bowl add the miso paste, garlic, ginger, sweetener, chili oil, lime zest and juice, and Tajin. With a spoon, lightly mash the paste into the other ingredients then stir well to evenly combine.
2. After preparing the remaining salsa ingredients, add the white portion of the scallions, black beans, mango, bell pepper, and jalapeno to the dressing and mix together to fully combine.
3. Season with a pinch of salt then carefully fold in the avocado and cilantro then cover and store in the fridge until ready to serve.
4. Optional, but to prepare the coconut cilantro rice, add some leftover or frozen rice to a microwave safe bowl. Add the coconut milk or use 1-2 frozen coconut milk ice cubes on top of the rice then cover and microwave for about 1 minute and 30 seconds or until the rice is hot and warmed through. Fold in the cilantro, maple syrup and a pinch of salt then mix well to combine making sure the coconut cube has fully melted into the rice.
5. To assemble, top a portion of rice with the black bean mango salsa and divide and garnish the bowls with some pepitas and extra remaining scallions before serving.