



Prostate Cancer and the Man You Love: Supporting and Caring for Your Partner

Anne Katz PhD RN FAAN; AASECT-certified sexuality counselor

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Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in men after skin cancer. However this cancer is highly curable and most men live for many years after treatment; only eleven percent of cancer deaths are due to prostate cancer. It is well known that the side effects of the treatment cause more suffering than the disease itself. Side effects of surgery include incontinence and erectile difficulties; radiation therapy leads to urinary and bowel problems; and androgen deprivation (hormone) therapy leads to a broad range of long-term side effects affecting physical and emotional functioning.

But it is not only the man who suffers through treatment and its side effects. The partners and spouses of prostate cancer survivors are known to experience distress as the man they love moves through the various stages of diagnosis, treatment, and survival. While prostate cancer is a couples' disease, there is much attention paid to the man with cancer and very little to the person and his partner or spouse, who is his prime supporter and who often struggles to make sense of what has happened and why, and how best to support and take care of him.

Prostate Cancer and the Man You Love speaks to the loving partners/spouses of men with prostate cancer, whether soon after diagnosis, or later when the man gets on with the rest of his life. Katz includes both the medical information necessary to understanding the disease and firsthand accounts from cancer patients and survivors and their partners. Tips for communication and problem solving, with both partners and health care teams, are offered throughout. Anyone dealing with prostate cancer will find in these pages comfort and insight, as well as specific advice for coping, healing, and moving forward in the spirit of healing and love.

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