

## Mental Health

# What to Discuss with Your Health Care Team

### **Talking about how you're feeling**

Sharing the emotional toll inflammatory arthritis has on your wellbeing with your health care team and reaching out to family, friends, and your caregiver for help and resources when you're feeling overwhelmed is really important.



## Section 5

If it's difficult for you to start this conversation with your team, the questions on the right may be helpful.

- I am overwhelmed by my diagnosis, is this normal?
- Can I talk to someone – are there resources that could help me?
- On most days, I feel the following about my inflammatory arthritis (circle answer/answers):

**Worried    Anxious    Hopeful**  
**Confident    Depressed**

Other observations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you're experiencing any of the following feelings, let your health care team know.

- Helplessness
- Loss of interest in friends, family or things I used to enjoy doing
- Trouble sleeping, fatigue
- Crying, unhappy
- Loss of interest in sex or intimacy

The following tips from The Arthritis Society may also be helpful.

When you stop enjoying yourself, your mood worsens and pain can feel more intense. Try treating yourself to one of the suggestions below:

- Do something nice for yourself
- Go to dinner with friends
- Take in a sporting event
- See a play or a movie

**Always speak to your health care team if you feel that something is “off” with your mood for more than a few weeks.**

## Section 5

- I've started feeling (circle answer):

**Better    Worse**

Since:

- Starting physical therapy
- Changing treatment, diet, or starting exercising

Other observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Things at home and/or work have been (circle answer):

**Different    Better**  
**The Same    Worse**

Since:

- I asked for help at home or work
- I started exercising/physical therapy

Other observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Something at work and/or home has changed
  - It has become more difficult to do (example)

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- Are there exercises I can do that would help me?

- I have been feeling less social and interested in my hobbies
  - I've been feeling this way since (date, event, or reason)

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- I often feel isolated because of my inflammatory arthritis
  - Could you recommend local support groups or online communities?

**Your health care team can help you with any emotional issues you are having because of your arthritis. Even if you are uncomfortable with discussing these topics, your health care team will be able to support you and your concerns.**

You're not alone if you find living with inflammatory arthritis overwhelming at times. Feeling overwhelmed is normal and your health care team understands that it's one of the very difficult challenges of coping with arthritis. For more information on dealing with the emotional aspect of inflammatory arthritis go to:

**The Arthritis Society**

<http://www.arthritis.ca/page.aspx?pid=1285>

**rheumatoidarthritis.net**

<http://rheumatoidarthritis.net/living-with-ra/managing-emotional-problems-and-stress/>

[Download or print the questions](#)