

Frequently Asked Questions About I Can Cope

What is I Can Cope?

I Can Cope is a series of free, educational, peer support classes now offered on a monthly basis over the telephone. Facilitated by medical professionals, each I Can Cope class highlights a different topic relevant to the cancer experience to enhance cancer patient's and caregiver's knowledge and skills and to empower them to cope more effectively with the challenges that living with cancer can bring.

Who can attend I Can Cope classes?

I Can Cope is exclusively for adult cancer patients and caregivers. This provides a safe, confidential environment for participants to receive support as well as support others by sharing questions, thoughts and experiences.

Why is I Can Cope offered over the phone?

Offering monthly I Can Cope classes over the telephone is one of the many ways the American Cancer Society strives to make support services and information easily accessible. I Can Cope telephone classes allow patients and caregivers to participate by telephone from locations that are most convenient for them, such as their own homes or offices. Patients who are ill, fatigued or have "at risk" immune systems have found I Can Cope telephone classes to be particularly helpful, as they require no travel and expend minimal amounts of energy. Caregivers have also benefited from this venue given the minimal demand it places on them in driving a patient and/or themselves to an I Can Cope class offered in person.

What is an I Can Cope telephone class like?

I Can Cope telephone classes are interactive! Patients and caregivers are encouraged to ask questions, give and receive feedback and share experiences with other participants. In order to assure confidentiality, only first names of participants are used. Due to the added anonymity provided by the telephone, many patients and caregivers feel more comfortable sharing their experiences, fears, and questions. I Can Cope telephone classes provide an easy way for patients and caregivers from all over the state to connect and share common hopes and strategies for coping with cancer. Prior to each telephone class, each participant receives materials for use during the class to guide discussion.

What topics are included in the I Can Cope telephone classes?

Each I Can Cope class focuses on a different cancer-related topic. Telephone classes are offered on a monthly basis and cycle through the following topics (in no particular order): Communicating Concerns and Feelings, Exploring Self-Esteem and Intimacy, Managing Cancer-Related Fatigue, Managing the Effects of Illness and Treatment, Nutrition During and After Cancer Treatment, Relieving Cancer Pain and Taking Charge of Money Matters.

How can patients and caregivers register for and join an I Can Cope telephone class?

1. Pre-registration is required. Patients and caregivers can register by calling toll-free 1-800-ACS-2345. This number is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A Cancer Information Specialist will ask for some basic contact information so that the Society can mail the class materials and dial-in information directly to the patient's or caregiver's home or email address.

2. On the day of the telephone class, pre-registered participants should enter the phone number they received 5-10 minutes before the beginning of the class. After a brief pause, a recorded message will ask them to enter the pin code they received using the keypad on their touch-tone telephone. Once they enter the code, they will be connected with the facilitators and other patients and caregivers from around the state who have also pre-registered for the class.

Can patients and caregivers still register for a telephone class after the registration deadline?

Yes. Patients and caregivers may still register by calling 1-800-ACS-2345. If they provide an email address, the class materials will be emailed to them before the class. If they do not have an email address, the materials will be sent to the address of their choice, but they may not receive the class materials in time for use during the class.

Why can't health care providers attend I Can Cope telephone classes?

I Can Cope telephone classes are designed for patients and caregivers only. Limiting participation to cancer patients and caregivers allows them to have a confidential, safe and open forum to discuss specific cancer-related topics and concerns with a trained medical facilitator. This creates an atmosphere of closeness and camaraderie among the participants and the facilitator, and encourages patients and caregivers to provide support to one another. For these reasons, health care providers cannot attend I Can Cope telephone classes, but are encouraged to talk with their patients about this program as a resource for on-going learning and support. Health care providers are welcome to experience select I Can Cope classes online at www.cancer.org/onlineclasses, and can also attend other learning opportunities provided by the American Cancer Society, such as monthly Doc Talks.

Is I Can Cope offered in other languages?

I Can Cope telephone classes are periodically offered in other languages, and some communities offer in-person classes in other languages. Call 1-800-ACS-2345 for a listing of I Can Cope classes in languages other than English.

How can patients and caregivers find out if I Can Cope classes are offered in person in their community?

Call toll-free 1-800-ACS-2345 to speak to a Cancer Information Specialist. The Specialist will tell them where the nearest face-to-face I Can Cope class is located, and can also help them to register.

What are the online I Can Cope classes like?

Online I Can Cope classes are free, interactive, and a quick and convenient way for patients and caregivers to get the answers they need, when they need them. The classes are self-paced, so participants control how quickly they move through them. I Can Cope online classes now have video, audio, and interactive quizzes. Links to more detailed information and related topics are available for those who are interested.

How can patients and caregivers register for online I Can Cope classes?

To take an online class, patients and caregivers can go to www.cancer.org/onlineclasses, select the class they want to take and complete the short registration form.