

# Managing Uncertainty Day-To-Day

## Audiotape Program



### *Introduction and Instructions*

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**♀** Women who (have survived) breast cancer can be faced with many stressors, including concerns about recurrence of breast cancer or the possibility of other cancers. These concerns are common and understandable. Yet, at times, these stressors can be difficult to deal with. The purpose of the audiotape program is to provide you with practical skills for dealing with uncertainty about recurrence and to help you cope better overall.

**♀** In this part of the program, called *Managing Uncertainty Day-to-Day*, we will provide you with practical skills that will help you deal with the times that you find yourself thinking about breast cancer; in other words, help you deal with your own personal triggers for uncertainty. The program will help you build upon your own natural way of handling things as well as help you learn some new things to manage uncertainty. The skills that you will learn will be directed at helping you manage the different aspects of uncertainty.

There are three tapes in the program.

- ✿ The introduction is on *Tape 1 Side A*. The other two tapes will present four different skills.
- ✿ On *Tape 2*, you will learn two basic relaxation skills to help you cope with physical tension and anxiety. The first skill is basic **breathing relaxation**, found on *Tape 2, Side A*, and the second skill is called **pleasant imagery**, found on *Tape 2, Side B*.
- ✿ On *Tape 3 Side A*, you will learn a skill called **calming self-talk**. Calming self-talk, something that you probably already do, is a skill that can be very useful for dealing with the emotions and thoughts that can occur during times of uncertainty. Finally on *Tape 3 Side B*, you will learn several basic **distraction** skills. Distraction skills can help you cope with uncertainty about breast cancer by helping you get involved with enjoyable activities or by helping you get your mind on other (positive) things.

**R** For each skill, the narrator on the tape will describe why it may be useful for you to use the skill, specifically what to do to practice the skill, and how to use it in your day-to-day life. The narrator will talk to you about how to use your skills at times when you have come to expect that you may have feelings of uncertainty such as getting ready to go for a mammogram. She will also talk to you about how to use your skills when you are unexpectedly faced with feelings of uncertainty. In this way, you may be able to learn how to prevent certain times of uncertainty, as well as how to manage feelings of uncertainty once they occur.

**R** To learn all of the basic skills in the program, you will need to spend some time listening to an audiotape each day for about four weeks. On the first day of *Week 1*, listen to the introductory tape. Then, practice with **breathing relaxation** (*Tape 2, Side A*), and continue to listen to this audiotape every day for at least one week. During *Week 2*, practice with **pleasant imagery** (*Tape 2, Side B*) every day.

During *Week 3*, practice with **calming self-talk** (*Tape 3 Side A*) at least once each day, and during *Week 4*, practice distraction (*Tape 3 Side B*) each day. At the end of the four-week period, you will have practiced with all four skills and then you can continue on your own to use the skills in your day-to-day life.

**R** Please keep in mind that the goal of the program is to help you manage or deal with uncertainty and stress. You should not expect to be able to eliminate all stress and uncertainty. Also, these strategies are not a substitute for your regular medical care.

**R** Our prior research has shown that these strategies are effective in helping people with other problems cope more effectively. We expect that they will help you too.



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