

Mind Over Cancer

Penn's Program for Stress Management Helps Cancer Patients

The Abramson Cancer Center has recently welcomed a new program into its family of support services – the Program for Stress Management. This program has been in existence at Penn Medicine since 2002, under the direction of Michael Baime, M.D., but now is fully integrated with the services offered to cancer patients and their families at the Abramson Cancer Center. Dr. Baime's goal is to teach patients how to concentrate on the here and now, on this moment, dismissing the past, which cannot be changed, and coping with thoughts of the future, which may be uncertain.

Meditation is increasingly utilized in our society for reducing stress, increasing productivity, and enhancing overall well-being. The Abramson Cancer Center's Program for Stress Management uses mindfulness meditation as the primary tool for long-term, comprehensive stress reduction. These clinically proven techniques are simple to learn and effective for people experiencing pain, stress, and psychological discomfort during their cancer journey.

"They are willing to take a chance on living fully now because they realize how precious life is," says Dr. Baime. "They want to experience the beauty of their lives."

The program teaches participants to change the negative and confusing thought patterns and emotions that accompany stress through deep relaxation, meditation, and physical exercise techniques. Participants learn how to recognize their unique reactions to stress, how to find more effective ways to respond to stressful situations, and how to



© Alan Kolic

Pictured from left: *Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., Founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction; Dan Gottlieb, Ph.D., host of WHYY's Voices in the Family; Michael Baime, M.D., Director of Penn's Program for Stress Management; and Caryn Lerman, Ph.D., Deputy Director of Penn's Abramson Cancer Center.*

utilize their own inner resources to find greater health and well-being. Participants reported impressive reductions in confusion, anxiety, depression, anger, and fatigue as measured by the Profile of Mood States (POMS) (see graph below).

This program, along with other integrative medicine and wellness programs at the Abramson Cancer Center, supplements the traditional treatment services provided to cancer patients. These programs offer patients and their families ways in which they can enhance the quality of their lives, minimize or reduce side effects of cancer and cancer treatment, and promote healing and recovery.

If you would like to find out more information about Penn's Program for Stress Management, please visit our website www.pennhealth.com/stress or call (800) 789-PENN. ♦

Profile of Mood States (POMS) Psychometric Test

