

Guideline 6: Emotional & informational needs

LEARNING OUTCOMES: In this section, you will explore the **emotional needs** of carers as well as strategies to provide carers support. You will also consider the common **information needs** of carers and learn tips in **how to address them**.

Introduction

Family members caring for a loved one with a serious illness may experience:

1. High levels of distress, anxiety, and depression ¹²

- Similar rates of anxiety and depression are reported among carers and patients. In a study of cancer carers:
 - **69% of carers screened positively for distress**
 - **35% for anxiety**
 - **27% for depression** ⁴⁴.
- Higher levels of carer distress are found when the patient is distressed, has poor physical functioning, advanced disease, and when carers report high caregiver burden and little support from others.
- **Carer distress was found to adversely impact on patient physical and mental health.**

2. High levels of unmet emotional and information needs ^{37 41}

- A 2015 study published in *Cancer* examined the unmet needs of 188 carers of patients diagnosed with lung, urological, or gastrointestinal cancer from Germany ⁴⁴. Of all caregivers
 - 14% had no unmet needs
 - 42% reported <10 unmet needs
 - **44% reported having >10 needs unmet.**
- Main caregiver concerns were regarding health care service and information needs followed by emotional and psychological needs

(abcimg://Group%20discussion)