

# Just Got Diagnosed

## What do you believe about your condition? A reality test.

One of the reasons being diagnosed with a medical condition is scary is that, because we are human, it is natural to interpret the situation through our own beliefs. The problem with beliefs is that they are not always based on reliable information. Instead, beliefs may be formed based on what we have heard, what we think we have heard, and what we have observed in others who have been in similar situations, or at least situations that seemed similar at the time.

What are your beliefs about your condition? Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- 1) How is someone with your condition affected by it? Where did you learn that information (the source of your belief)?

### Symptoms

### Source

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### Daily Life

### Source

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### Future Outcome

### Source

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2) What is the evidence of these beliefs that you see in your own life?

## Symptoms

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## Daily Life

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### Evaluating Your Beliefs

Take an honest look at your beliefs and the sources of your beliefs. Were you able to trace each belief back to its source? Did some of your beliefs seem not to have any source? Were all your sources reliable?

Based on the facts, which of these beliefs are realistic? And are there some that may or may not be realistic?

Here are some ways you can use your list of beliefs to help you to cope with your diagnosis.

Take your list of beliefs to your healthcare professional. Ask your physician, or a member of his or her staff, to go over the list with you and help you to get a better understanding of the facts behind your beliefs and what these facts mean in terms of your situation. Your medical condition may affect one individual differently from another.

Gather information on your own, through credible Websites as well as literature from your physician or through organizations that are focused on your condition, like the American Diabetes Association and the American Cancer Society.

Get coaching on how to deal with the ongoing adjustment to your condition. During your information-gathering, you may discover that some of your concerns were not realistic, others are. Get help from experts in making decisions about how to best cope with your condition – diet, exercise, financial planning... whatever you need to do to feel like you are taking the best possible care of yourself. Consider complementary practices like Reiki therapy, meditation, and acupuncture.

Pay attention to your mental and spiritual health. After all, body, mind, and spirit work together. Find someone to talk to on a regular basis – a counselor, friend, family member, or member of the clergy. Don't face your fears and frustrations alone.

Remind yourself that there are some things you can control and others you can't. There is nothing human beings want more than to be in control, but one of the lessons of illness is that we don't always have the final say. Take a realistic look at what you can take charge of, in relation to your diagnosis. (And review steps 1-4 to help you cope with what you can't control.)

Knowledge is power!

