

# Problem-Solving during a Neuroendocrine Cancer Diagnosis



Problem-solving is part of everyday life. For some people, it comes naturally. For others, it can feel overwhelming – especially during times of stress.

A diagnosis of neuroendocrine cancer can bring a steady stream of problems to cope with, manage, or solve. These challenges can affect your overall wellbeing, your confidence, and your usual ability to manage day-to-day life. Decisions about treatment, care, and ongoing support can begin to blur together with everyday responsibilities, making everything feel heavier than it once did.

It can help to understand the difference between a problem and a decision, and to have a simple strategy you can return to when things feel unclear. Having a structured way to approach challenges can restore a sense of steadiness and control.



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## Understanding the emotional side of problems

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Problem-solving begins with identifying what is concerning you and deciding whether it needs to be fixed, managed, or accepted.

Problems often bring strong emotions – fear, anxiety, dread, worry, shame, or guilt. These feelings are normal. Acknowledging and accepting them, rather than pushing them away, can help you think more clearly. When you allow yourself to name the emotion, it becomes easier to reframe the situation and move toward a practical solution.

Problem-solving strategies are not about “staying positive.” They are about creating a framework that reduces emotional distress and may help you cope with:

- Physical changes
- Uncertainty about treatment
- Communication challenges
- Practical concerns
- Shifts in identity and independence



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## A guide to problem solving

Having a plan can bring a sense of direction, even when circumstances feel uncertain. You may find the following step-by-step approach helpful:



### 1. Define the problem

**Ask yourself:**

What exactly is the situation that needs action or a decision?

- Be specific. Writing it down or talking it through with someone you trust can help clarify the issue and reduce the emotional weight that comes with "having a problem."



### 2. Brainstorm possible solutions

**Ask yourself:**

What are all the possible options?

- Write everything down – even ideas that seem unrealistic at first. Brainstorming is about generating options, not judging them.



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### 3. Weigh the pros and cons

Consider each option carefully:

- Which solutions offer the most benefit?
- Which involve compromises you are willing to accept?
- Which disadvantages feel too great for you right now?

There is rarely a perfect solution. Often, you are choosing the option that feels most manageable or aligned with your values.

### 4. Make your selection

Choose the option that offers the greatest benefit or the most acceptable balance for your current situation.

**Remember, this is about what works for you.**



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### 5. Act and Evaluate

Put your decision into practice. After some time, reflect:

- Is this helping?
- Does it need adjustment?

In many situations, you can revisit your decision and try a different approach. Flexibility is part of effective problem-solving.

### 6. Seek Support

You do not have to solve everything alone.

Talking through a problem can reduce negative feelings. Sharing your thoughts and possible solutions with a trusted loved one, healthcare professional, or support group can provide comfort, clarity, and reassurance. Even when a problem cannot be fully solved, feeling heard and supported can make it feel more manageable.

During a neuroendocrine cancer diagnosis, not every problem has an immediate or flawless answer. But having a steady, structured way to approach challenges can help you regain a sense of control and confidence.



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