

Tip Sheet:

Zakim Center for Integrative Therapies

The Leonard P. Zakim Center for Integrative Therapies and Healthy Living offers services to ease symptoms and enhance the quality of life for patients with cancer and their families. Zakim Center therapists and instructors are trained in the special needs and concerns of people facing cancer. Through various therapies, classes, and programs led by skilled health-care professionals, the center helps patients feel better and take an active role in their cancer care.

What are integrative therapies?

Integrative therapies (sometimes called “complementary therapies”) are offered alongside traditional care to promote well-being by reducing pain, nausea, stress, and other symptoms caused by cancer and treatment. These therapies include acupuncture, massage, nutrition, movement, meditation, and expressive arts therapy.

What does the Zakim Center offer?

Acupuncture

A standard practice within traditional Chinese medicine for thousands of years, acupuncture has in recent decades been widely accepted by Western culture as an additional treatment for many illnesses, including cancer.

Acupuncture involves having hair-thin needles gently inserted into the skin at specific points, called acupoints. Acupuncture may be used for people with symptoms that include chronic pain, nausea, vomiting, insomnia, depression, anxiety, and fatigue. Acupuncture may be used during or after active treatment – such as surgeries, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or hormonal therapy – to reduce the side effects of cancer treatments or manage cancer-related symptoms. Acupuncture is available for both adult and pediatric patients in individual sessions.

Massage

Massage therapy involves therapeutic touch and different style strokes to support the muscles and soft tissues of the body. **Oncology massage** is a type of massage therapy that is adjusted to provide a safe and helpful session for any patient with a cancer diagnosis. Research and clinical experience show that it may help with treatment symptoms such as pain, anxiety and depression, fatigue, insomnia, and nausea. Massage therapy is available for both adult and pediatric patients in individual sessions.

Integrative Medicine Consult

If you’re wondering which therapy to try, you may schedule an Integrative Medicine Consult with a Zakim Center nurse practitioner who can recommend which services might best fit your cancer diagnosis, treatment schedule, interests, and symptoms.

Zakim Center's Healthy Living Program

The Zakim Center's Healthy Living program includes a broad range of offerings such as physical activity, mindful movement, weight management, and nutrition education.

Exercise and Mind/Body Movement Programs

The Zakim Center offers a variety of group exercise and mind/body movement programs, including free classes in qigong, tai chi, yoga, and women's exercise. These therapies, which include mind/body, meditation, and breathing techniques, can ease tired muscles, reduce stress, and increase positive energy. Group sessions are for adult patients and caregivers at all fitness levels.

Exercise Consultations

Exercise holds benefits for everyone, and a growing number of studies show that cancer patients in particular can gain valuable benefits from regular exercise, including reducing fatigue, improving mood, reducing anxiety, and helping to maintain a healthy weight. Patients can meet with Dana-Farber's exercise physiologist who can answer fitness-related questions and provide personalized exercise tips. Consults are available for men or women with any cancer diagnosis.

Integrative Nutrition Consultations

An integrative nutrition consultation is one that assesses multiple factors and influences on a person's diet and nutrition. A few of the many ways an integrative consultation can support one's nutrition and wellness journey include: determining complementary therapies that assist with improved metabolism and weight maintenance, providing nutrition recommendations tailored to exercise goals, and acknowledging the mind/body connection and relationship with food. Open to adult patients.

Zakim's Kitchen

Eating during and after treatment can sometimes be difficult. Zakim's Kitchen workshops are informative and entertaining opportunities for patients, caregivers, and families to learn easy and tasty meal preparation tips and tricks.

Topics related to general health and wellness, as well as management of cancer-specific symptoms and side effects, are offered throughout the year.

Meditation and Mindfulness Program

Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness meditation sessions are held three times a week in the Zakim Center. Participants will be guided through a mindfulness meditation designed to help decrease negative or fearful thoughts and help lead to a more peaceful state of mind. These workshops are open to adult and pediatric patients and their caregivers in a group setting.

Mind/Body Resilience

Mind/Body Resilience is an eight-week program designed to teach patients coping skills to manage stress and nurture resilience. The program is available in person or through an online virtual program delivered through live video conferences. These programs are open to adult patients and their caregivers.

Mind/Body Book Club

Open to Dana-Farber patients, this group reads books that discuss concepts related to well-being of mind, body, and spirit from popular culture, as well as a few classics. Like a traditional book club, we meet regularly to discuss each book as a group. For those patients who have participated in our eight-week Mind/Body Resilience program, these readings will help reinforce many of the tools and strategies learned in the group.

Expressive Arts Program

Music Therapy Consultations

Music therapy is the clinical use of music as a tool to help treatment goals. Music therapy has been clinically shown to bring about positive changes in mood and increase quality of life by changing our awareness of pain, reducing anxiety, and supporting participants in developing positive coping skills. A music therapy session may include making music through songwriting or playing an instrument, or through music listening, such as in meditation with live music. The therapist may also share different ways you can use music and creativity in your own time to support your treatment goals.

Music Therapy Group Classes

Meditation with Live Music

Experience an alternative mindfulness meditation experience with the presence of live music. Research shows that listening to live music during meditation may help focus an active mind, decrease heart rate, anxiety, and pain, and guide you to a deeper relaxation.

Beginners Ukulele

Research shows that playing music may reduce pain, increase quality of life, and manage stress. Ukuleles are simple to play for any age, easy to transport, and great for playing many styles of music.

Drum Circle for Beginners

Drum Circle sessions include a guided experience of mindfulness in basic drumming techniques, and group drumming instruction for all levels. Group drumming can support relaxation, stress reduction, improved mood, and sense of community.

Heartbeat Songs Project

The heartbeat is a symbol of compassion, resilience, and personal identity. Each of us has our own unique heartbeat, and our own story to tell. The Heartbeat Songs project pairs patients and family members with a music therapist to co-create original music that incorporates the recorded sound of the participants' heartbeat. Music may be instrumental or with lyrics. Sessions may include discussion, picking musical sounds and styles, song meaning development, or lyrics writing. Songs can serve as a personal memento or even a gift for a loved one, and participants will receive a digital and physical copy of their song at the end of the process.

Creative Arts Workshops/Studio

Patients, caregivers, and staff are invited to the Creative Arts Studio in the Blum Resource Center to explore how expressive arts can provide valuable coping skills to give you energy and reduce anxiety.

What about paying for these services?

The Zakim Center is dedicated to making integrative therapies available and affordable for all Dana-Farber patients. Some services can be billed to health insurance, and others are offered at a reduced rate. For services with a fee, the center provides a receipt, so you can seek insurance reimbursement. Financial Assistance may also be available. All group programming is free to DFCI patients and caregivers. To learn more please contact the Zakim Center at Zakim_Center@dfci.harvard.edu or 617-632-3322.

How do I make an appointment or sign up for a class?

You may contact the center directly or be referred by your care team. To learn more, book an appointment or register for a class or group program, visit www.dana-farber.org/zakim; see "Program Calendar," email zakim_center@dfci.harvard.edu, or call 617-632-3322.

Registration is strongly encouraged for all group programming.

Who was Leonard P. Zakim?

Lenny Zakim was a Dana-Farber patient who found comfort and renewal by combining acupuncture, massage, and other integrative therapies into his treatment for multiple myeloma. Before his death in 1999, he advocated passionately for these services to be part of Dana-Farber's approach to caring for the whole person.

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