

The balancing act between fear and hope

Negative feelings are part of **being human** in order to adequately **process** (traumatic) experiences.



Hope is a multidimensional and highly **individual** feeling, which is subject to continuous **adaptation**.

- Fear is a **natural and important reaction**. It is a force that drives us to cope with real threats.
- Occurring at a **moderate degree** fear ...
 - has a **protective function** through a performance-enhancing effect.
 - **sharpens** our senses & **activates** our survival mechanisms.
 - can lead to personal maturation.

- Hope is a **confident inner orientation** that something desirable will occur in the future, without having certainty about it.
- It can be accompanied by fear and worry.

It is normal that fear and hope, worry and confidence can alternate in the shortest possible time or that they are present at the same time. The ability to sustain this duality "**double awareness**" is considered to represent an optimal psychological adaptation to disease or crises.

"Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out." Václav Havel

About “good” and “bad” feelings

Right is what feels right for you!



There are no bad feelings. Every emotion has its justification and function and should be allowed to be felt and expressed.

What’s needed?

! Continuous **Mental Health surveillance** during treatment and in life-long follow-up care

→ ... for people living with and beyond cancer & their families/friends

! **Easy access** to psychosocial treatment and other support options

! Dedicated professionals with the necessary **knowledge, skills and time**

! **Peer-support** programmes

Feelings that subjectively feel right and coherent lead to greater well-being, regardless of whether they are considered to be “good” or not.

Positive attitude vs. “Toxic positivity”

Positive attitude and optimism are generally associated with higher well-being...



BUT... when used to suppress negative emotions, it can do more harm than good.

The force of “having to be grateful” can lead to pressure and feelings of guilt. Traumatic experiences should have a place and be dealt with.

