

Living in a Sea of Uncertainty

As humans, we often like our days to have some predictability and certainty. Whether this comes from the routine of having our morning coffee, our set exercise class, a consistent bedtime, or a regular commitment to church or whānau, these routines often form the structure of our days and weeks. They can provide us with a sense of security; if we can predict what's happening next, we feel more in control.

But life isn't always predictable or within our control. A diagnosis of advanced breast cancer can create a raft of uncertainty. For many, it brings the future into the forefront of their mind. But that future can contain a big question mark. And with that question mark can come a range of emotions, including, fear, sadness, anger, worry and even FOMO (fear of missing out). Add in the physical challenges of treatment or deteriorating health and people can feel like they're lost in a sea of uncertainty.



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This sense of feeling lost or uncertain is common when facing a life changing diagnosis. It can be part of our brain's way of processing what is happening, and trying to predict what will happen next. But, if all our attention focuses on the uncertain future, our world can start to feel overwhelming or out of control. We can get 'stuck in our heads', consumed with distressing thoughts and emotions.

So, what can we do if we find ourselves lost in a sea of uncertainty?

- ✓ Recognise if you're lost in that uncertainty. Try saying to yourself "I notice that I'm having those uncertain thoughts or feelings again". It might seem counter-intuitive, but just by noticing and naming what is happening, we can start to feel a bit more in control.
- ✓ Talking or writing down questions, emotions, plans or concerns can be helpful for gaining insights and a sense of control. Just make sure you put a limit on how long you focus on these, so there's still balance in your day.
- ✓ Try to establish a predictable routine. This can sometimes be hard with physical health changes. But even listening to your favourite song first thing in the morning can provide the basis of a routine, which can give our brain some of the predictability it craves.
- ✓ Bring your attention to the present moment. What is important to you right now? Is it thinking about what will happen tomorrow, or is it enjoying what you are doing right now? By drawing our attention to the present, we can make the most of precious moments.
- ✓ Consider what anchors you. It could be family, whānau, spirituality, creativity, nature, music, sports, reading, whakapapa...your personal list will likely be many and varied. View your anchors as essential to your wellbeing and try to bring them into your daily life. Sometimes with physical health challenges, we need to be flexible with how this looks, but there are still many ways we can connect.

While we might not be able to control the uncertain sea around us, there are many strategies we can use to help us anchor and stay afloat. For more helpful information and tips, check out:

www.cancer.org.nz

www.breastcancerfoundation.org.nz



 **Pfizer**

IBRANCE
palbociclib

IBRANCE® (palbociclib 75 mg, 100 mg and 125 mg) Capsules and Tablets

IBRANCE (palbociclib) is a funded prescription medicine used to treat HR+, HER2- advanced breast cancer taken in combination with an aromatase inhibitor or fulvestrant. IBRANCE has risks and benefits. Do not take IBRANCE if you are allergic to palbociclib or any of the other ingredients in IBRANCE capsules or IBRANCE tablets. Caution is needed if you are premenopausal or perimenopausal, have or have had abnormal blood test results, respiratory infections or problems with your lungs, problems with your liver or kidneys, are lactose intolerant, are pregnant or planning to become pregnant or are breastfeeding. Tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines. Common side effects include infection, abnormal blood test results, tiredness, feeling sick or vomiting, diarrhoea, sore mouth, lips or tongue, hair loss, loss of appetite, nose bleed, skin rash, change in sense of taste, blurred vision, increased tearing or dry eyes, shortness of breath, bleeding or bruising more easily than usual. If symptoms continue or you have side effects, see your doctor, pharmacist or healthcare professional. Ask your doctor if IBRANCE is right for you. Use strictly as directed. Contains 75 mg, 100 mg or 125 mg of palbociclib. IBRANCE is funded. A pharmacy charge and normal doctor's fees apply for all prescriptions. Further information on IBRANCE is available from Medsafe www.medsafe.govt.nz or Pfizer New Zealand Limited, Auckland, www.pfizer.co.nz Ph. 0800 736 363. V10721