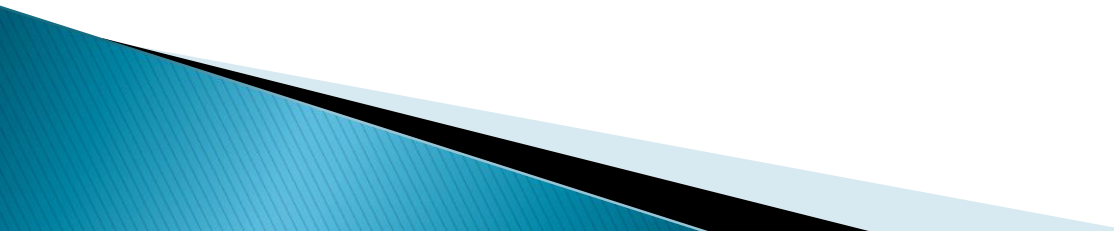


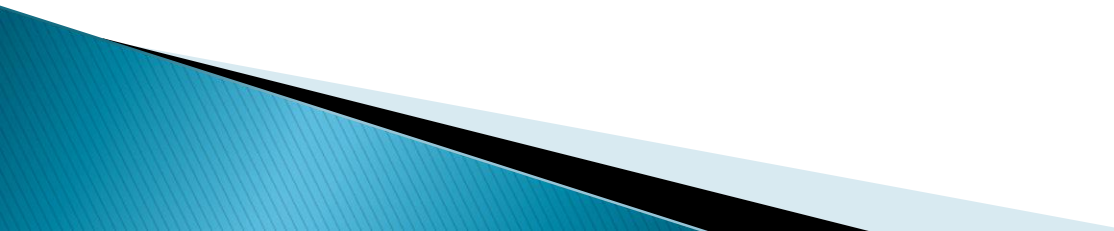
Managing the Effects of “Chemo Brain”

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Objectives

- ▶ Introduction to Chemo Brain workshops
 - ▶ Define “Chemo Brain”
 - ▶ Identify Signs and Symptoms of chemotherapy induced cognitive impairments.
 - ▶ Outline basic strategies for management.
 - ▶ Help providers recognize when additional services might be warranted and how to refer.
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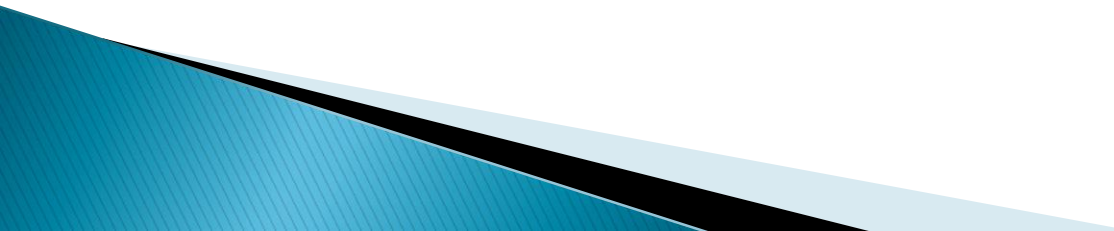
Chemo Brain Workshops

- ▶ Workshops or classes are now being periodically offered to cancer survivors and their caregivers.
 - ▶ About one and a half hours long.
 - ▶ Small groups of about 16 participants
 - ▶ Cover symptoms, education about underlying problem, management strategies, and ways to get more help if needed.
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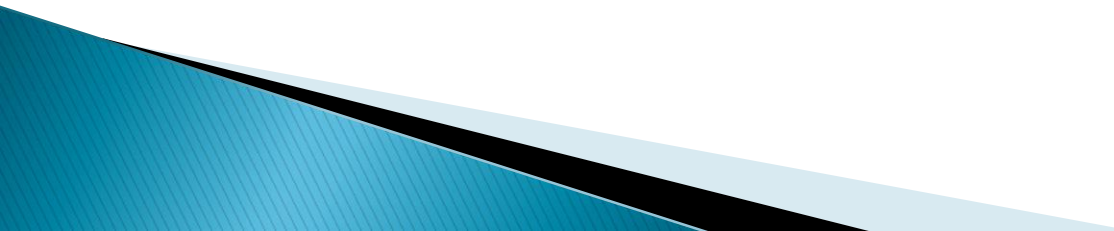
Chemo Brain Defined

- ▶ Chemotherapy induced cognitive impairments
 - “Foggy-headed”
 - Poor memory
 - Trouble concentrating
 - Short attention span
 - Disorganized
 - Trouble multi-tasking
 - Word-finding problems

State of the Science of Chemo Brain

- ▶ Statistics are not clear
 - ▶ Confounding factors make study difficult
 - Anxiety/depression
 - Normal aging
 - Other health issues
 - Sleep disorders
 - Medications
 - Etc.
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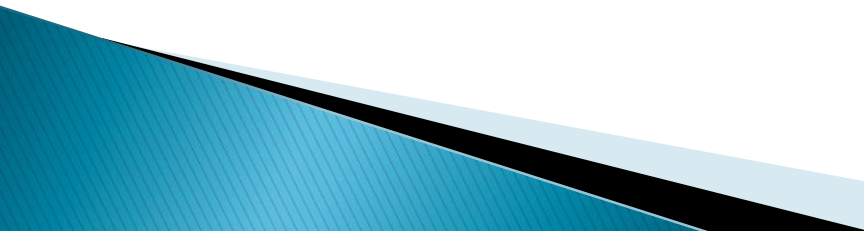
What's Chemo Brain Look Like?

- ▶ Usually mild symptoms
 - ▶ Usually improve without specific treatment over time
 - ▶ At least some cancer survivors have long-term changes to their thinking skills
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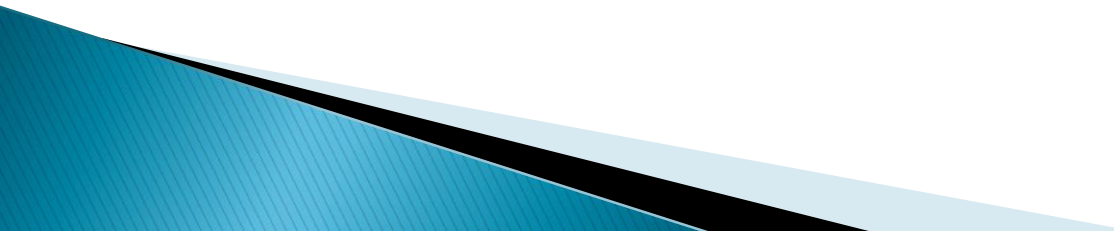
Will Treatment Make it Better?

- ▶ Brain Exercises—mixed results, no clear evidence either for or against brain exercises
- ▶ Management techniques/strategies DO improve function

Management Strategies for Attention/Concentration

- ▶ Eliminate distractions in the environment
 - Turn off radio/TV
 - Shut doors
 - Turn off room lights and illuminate only the desk/table
 - Pull curtains/shades
 - Orient the desk away from the open door or open room
 - Wear ear plugs
- 

Management Strategies for Attention/Concentration

- ▶ Decrease Internal Distractions
 - Manage pain
 - Manage sleep
 - Avoid being overly hungry or thirsty
 - Get help or counseling if needed
- 

A word or two about Sleep...

- ▶ Sleep deprivation can lead to many chronic health issues including (but not limited to)
 - Decreased immune system
 - Weight gain
 - Metabolic syndrome
 - Increased cancer risk
 - Grogginess is worse than being drunk as far as safety goes...
- ▶ Sleep management is important and referral to an expert is something to consider.

Management Strategies for Memory Problems

- ▶ Write it down.
 - Keep a notebook
 - Use an electronic notepad
 - Use post-it notes
- ▶ Use the calendar.
 - Electronic calendar
 - Use reminder alerts
 - Applications for phone/tablet

Management Strategies for Memory Problems

- ▶ Put items in the same place all the time.
- ▶ Plan a route and write it down.
- ▶ Keep important items in hand (don't lay them down)—for example, in a cross body bag.
- ▶ There are internal memory strategies that can be learned.

Cognitive Therapy

- ▶ Primary objectives:

1. Understand what is happening and what has changed from “before chemo”
2. Determine strategies which enable function
3. Develop exercises to deal with person-specific issues

How to Get Help

- ▶ Physician order:
 - “speech therapy evaluate and treat for cognitive changes status post chemotherapy”
- ▶ Be sure the referral goes to an SLP with experience in mild brain injury.