

Supplementary File 4: Coding system

Main Category	Subcategory	Sub-subcategory (1st Order)	Sub-subcategory (2nd Order)	Sub-subcategory (3rd Order)
Diagnosis (0/0)	Story of receiving the diagnosis (43/23)			
	Thoughts upon receiving the diagnosis (2/1)	Overwhelmed by the diagnosis (19/16)		
		Uncertainty about what lies ahead (6/6)		
		Remaining composed (3/2)		
		Wanting to see children grow up (and fight for it) (9/7)		
		Fear of leaving children behind (8/6)		
		Fear of burdening children (3/3)		
	Coping with the diagnosis (1/1)	Pragmatism (3/2)		
		Awareness of personal needs (7/4)		
		Sadness (1/1)		
		Gratitude (2/2)		
		Optimism (7/5)		
	Symptoms during therapy (18/11)	Nausea and vomiting (3/3)		
		Hair loss (15/8)		

	Dissatisfaction with medical support (15/7)			
Illness in the context of motherhood (1/1)	General attitude toward motherhood (4/4)	Changed (13/13)		
		Unchanged (15/15)		
	Maternal role affected by illness (0/0)	Dealing with uncertain future (11/10/	Maintaining normalcy (20/14)	
			Responsibility toward children (7/6)	
			Hiding the effects of illness from children (7/4)	
		Children witnessing mother's illness (9/7)	Guilt toward children (3/3)	
			Dealing with hair loss (14/11)	
			Spreading of one's own feelings onto the whole family (9/7)	
			Adaptation and Consideration (6/4)	
			Challenges due to hospitalization (7/6)	
			Illness-unrelated challenges (4/4)	
		Perceiving own limitations (0/0)	Reduced performance capacity (11/8)	
			Unavailability to family (8/5)	
			Struggle with the situation (8/5)	

			Burden of daily life (7/6)	
			Inability to meet children's needs (4/4)	
	Fighting cancer as a family task (1/1)	Partnership (12/10)		
		Family cohesion (15/11)		
		Appreciation of / gratefulness for the family (14/11)		
		Independence of children (14/8)		
		More time as family (10/7)		
		Valuing shared time (9/6)		
		Family as source of strength (5/3)		
	New priorities (0/0)	Perceiving personal needs (10/6)		
		Cleanliness (4/3)		
		Lower Expectations (2/2)		
		Less perfectionism (5/5)		
Mother-child relationship (0/0)	Change perceived (0/0)	Allowing children freedom, growing independence (6/3)		
		Negative (0/0)	Relationship neglected (3/2)	
			Distancing by children (10/6)	
			Illness is a burden to children (3/3)	
		Positive (0/0)	Empathy and solidarity (10/9)	

			Closer bond (10/7)	Sharing worries and fears (6/6)
				More physical affection (8/5)
			No reservations in interacting with each other (5/5)	
			Children more caring (8/8)	
	No change perceived (12/10)	Relationship has always been close or independent (4/4)		
Communication and openness (0/0)	Communication with children (0/0)	Not open (9/9)		
		open (20/20)		
	Timing of disclosure (6/6)	Holding off on telling others (12/12)		
	Experience of the conversation with the children (22/15)			
	Approach to hereditary cancer (16/9)			
	Openness as a deliberate strategy (0/0)	Illness perception of the children (20/15)		
		Including children in the process (12/8)		
		Secrecy not an option (7/6)		
		Allowing questions (7/7)		
		Strengthened relationship and trust (6/4)		

	Age-appropriate communication (21/14)	Avoiding details (23/17)		
		Using the word „cancer“ (0/0)	Yes (5/5)	
			No (15/12)	
		Focus on recovery (7/6)		
		Downplaying (4/3)		
	(Wish for) assistance in communication (9/7)	Uncertainty about involving children (7/6)		
		Use of leaflets and book (7/4)		
		Help from professionals (8/6)		
Social environment and support (0/0)	Satisfaction with support (11/9)	Offers of help (1/1)	Friends and neighbors (1/1)	Childcare (6/6)
				Household tasks (3/3)
				Emotional exchange (3/3)
			Parents (11/8)	Mothers (6/4)
		Partner as key support (12/11)		
		Practical support (6/5)		
		Exchange with others affected (3/2)		
		Sometimes excessive support (2/1)		
	Wish for more support (6/5)	Social services (2/2)		
		Logistical challenges (4/4)		
	Difficulties with school or kindergarten (7/5)	Lack of understanding (3/2)		

	Domestic helpers (12/10)			
	Communicating illness to environment (4/2)			
Psycho-oncological care (0/0)	Need (0/0)	Involving children (4/2)		
		Lack of time and place (3/1)		
		Ambivalent (6/4)		
		Present (1/1)		
		Not present (13/11)		
		Trying support (2/2)		
	Psycho-oncological therapy (0/0)	Organized by patient (5/4)		
		Organized by hospital (6/6)		
		Experiences (0/0)	Positive (10/9)	New insights (5/4)
			Negative (7/5)	
			Not being able to find a suitable therapist (5/5)	
			Processing everything takes time (3/3)	
		Focus on movement, nutrition, self-healing (5/5)		
	Information and availability of psycho-oncological support (0/0)	Doctors fail to inform patients (16/12)		
		Offer is valuable and important (9/8)		
		Room for improvement (8/7)		
		Sufficient information (4/4)		

	Peer exchange (0/0)	Emotionally burdensome (1/1)		
		Helpful (6/4)		

In parentheses: numbers of mentions / number of participants. It should be noted that, first, multiple mentions by the same person from different parts of the interview could be assigned to the same category when appropriate. Second, individual mentions (codes) could be allocated to more than one category. An effort was made to assign mentions as precisely as possible. In rare cases where this was not possible, the respective mention (code) was retained within one of the main or subcategory.

