

Living your best life after a breast cancer diagnosis.



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Resilience and Survivorship
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Introduction

❖ Social Work Experience

- ❖ Worked for over 27 years as a clinical medical social worker
- ❖ Currently working at the **Cancer Caring Center**-non-profit support agency for patients and their families-providing free care
 - ❖ **Director of Counseling**-provide counseling/intake calls- psychosocial assessments/resource referrals
 - ❖ **Lead support groups**-Cranberry general group, Brain Tumor group, Metastatic cancer group
- ❖ **Find Your Balance LLC, Owner/Counselor**-acute/chronic illness, caregiver support, women's health issues and grief/bereavement

❖ Personal Connection with Cancer

- ❖ My Personal Journey as a Co-Survivor

Who is a Caregiver?



- ❖ **Define Caregiver-partner, spouse, parent, children, friend**
- ❖ **Define “Giving Care”**

- ❖ While giving care, it is necessary to at times put your own needs and feelings aside. But putting your needs aside for long period of time is not good for your health. You need to take care of YOU too!!! If you don't you may not be able to care for others.

- ❖ **Airplane instruction-put YOUR oxygen mask on first!!**
- ❖ **It can be a Marathon not a Spring-need to pace yourself!!**

- ❖ Discuss **Compassion Fatigue**-the traumatic stress reaction to caring for others to an extreme.
 - ❖ **Multiple caregiver roles-care** of loved one who is ill, elderly parent, child, professional roles ie. Nurse, MD, social worker, therapist , fire fighter, police officer, paramedic, PT/OT, nutritionist, home care provider

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Journey of a Cancer Survivor/Co-Survivor



❖ Cancer Journey is like a Roller Coaster Ride

❖ Seeking to navigate through these four areas:

- ❖ Fear/Anxiety/Worry → Courage
- ❖ Lack of Control → Acceptance
- ❖ Hopelessness → Hope
- ❖ Sadness → Joy

❖ Both Survivor and Co-Survivors experience a wide array of feelings throughout this journey

- ❖ Sadness
- ❖ Anger
- ❖ Grief
- ❖ Guilt
- ❖ Loneliness

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Co-Survivor Supporting the Survivor



- ❖ Going with your loved one to medical visits
 - ❖ Talking with health care providers
 - ❖ Let your loved one be your guide

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Needs of Co-Survivors



❖ Asking for Support

❖ Society says in subtle and not-so subtle ways that the healthy loved ones should stay quiet, hold down the fort, be a martyr, keep a stiff upper lip and keep a lid on your emotions.

❖ Gregg Piburn-Beyond Chaos: One Man's Journey Alongside His Chronically Ill Wife

❖ Caregiving may mean admitting we don't always have the answers or know what to do. It means admitting our fears, taking time for ourselves and getting help when we need it.

❖ Mel Pohl, Kay Deniston, Doug Toft-The Caregivers' Journey

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Types of Co-Survivors

❖ Caregivers seem to fall into two categories:

- ❖ Those who act out of pity and ignore their own needs
- ❖ Those who act out of compassion and recognize the importance of caring for themselves as well

The One who cares makes it clear that whatever happens in the external world, being present to each other is what really matters.

Henri J. M. Nouwen, Out of Solitude

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Caring for Yourself YSC regional symposium

❖ Making time for yourself

❖ Find Meaning during Cancer

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Talking with Others



❖ Your Partner

❖ Your Spouse

❖ Your Friend

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Managing Family Conflict in Caregiving



❖ With Survivor

❖ With Others

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Tips to Handle Conflict



❖ If you're like most people, you will, from time to time say or do the "wrong thing." When it happens, make amends for it as best you can, and then drop it. What matters is that you have attempted to act out of love and compassion and you did the best you could."

❖ Janice Harris Lord-Beyond Sympathy

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Children/Teen Caregivers



- ❖ Children from early ages are extremely perceptive and preventing them from sharing their feelings about how their lives have changed can be harmful. Given the opportunity, children can become more compassionate and can take pride in helping with cooking or other household tasks in order to lighten the load. Keep lines of communication open.

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Co-Survivor's: What is your Co-Survivor Superpower?



- Define Caregivers/Discuss Types of Caregivers
- Discuss Elements of Superpowers
- Discuss Importance of Communication/Styles
 - Analytical
 - Amiable
 - Driver
 - Expressive

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Activities



- ❖ Communication Styles Self-Assessment
- ❖ Support group interaction

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❖ Life changing events often give people the chance to grow. They may help people see what's most important to them. Many say that caring for someone with cancer changed them forever. They used their strengths to support their loved one. And they learned more about themselves along the way!

- ❖ How well people manage lives marked by illness depends not on the nature of the illness, but on the strength of their conviction that life is worth living no matter what complications are imposed on it.
 - ❖ Cheri Register-Living with Chronic Illness: Days of Patience and Passion

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- Care Notes-Caring for Yourself When You're Caring for Someone Ill-Kairos Support Caregivers
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