



Touch of Courage

. Connection

Beyond Pink TEAM

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The Emotions of Breast Cancer

By Jeanne Mullen

Hearing that you have breast cancer is a great shock for most women. In your mind it could be the worst thing to hear and the last thing you expect. At first, you may feel completely overwhelmed. You may have trouble thinking, eating and sleeping. These are normal reactions. As time moves on, your feelings can change rapidly. You may feel denial, anger, stress, anxiety or depression. You may also feel lonely. These feelings are also common in the people who are close to you.

Knowing that you have cancer can make you feel that you have less control over your life. You can gain more control by learning as much as you can about your illness. Make sure that all of your questions/concerns are addressed by your health care providers. Remember that it is acceptable to get a second opinion about your cancer diagnosis and treatment plan if you feel the need to do so.

Feelings of anger can be directed at the cancer, your fate, health care providers, or healthy friends and your family. These feelings of anger often come from other feelings more difficult to express such as fear, panic, frustration, and helplessness. Ignoring or trying to cover up your emotions may make you feel worse. The best way to deal with these emotions is to talk about them. It can lessen the stress they cause.

If you are not comfortable talking about your feelings you can keep a daily journal to express your thoughts and feelings. Another way to deal with your stress is to attend a support group to talk to others who understand what you are going through. You can also do relaxation exercises or learn to meditate. People who have religious faith often turn to prayer to help them. Professional counseling is also available. Ask to see a social worker at your Cancer Treatment Center.

No one needs to face breast cancer alone. Help is available from family members, friends, other individuals dealing with cancer, members of the clergy, and health professionals. It is okay to ask for help. This is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Living with cancer may be the biggest challenge you have ever faced. It is important to work through your personal feelings and to go on living and enjoying each day. Remember to set goals so that you have something to look forward to accomplishing. These goals should be for tomorrow, next week and next year. As one breast cancer survivor put it, "Cancer granted me the vision to see each day as precious, a gift to be used wisely and richly."

For some women, a support group is a good option to help in dealing

with the emotions. There are several options available here in the Cedar Valley:

- The **Touch of Courage** breast cancer support group is sponsored by the Beyond Pink TEAM. It meets the 1st Monday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Kimball Ridge Center, 2101 Kimball Avenue, Waterloo. (Contact: Dawn Colbert 415-6430)
- **Care and Share** is a cancer support group (any type of cancer) that meets the 1st Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM at the Covenant Cancer Treatment Center, 200 E. Ridgeway Avenue, Waterloo (Contact: Jeanne Mullen, 272-2816)
- **Young Cancer Survivors** are Meet, Mingle and Learn events sponsored by the Beyond Pink TEAM. These quarterly events are held on the 3rd Tuesday of January, April, June and September from 4:30 PM to 7:00 PM and are open to all young women (including young at heart!) with any cancer. Events include a light meal, discussion tables and a speaker at 6:00 PM. You can come and go as your schedule allows. (Contact: Emily Hodgkin 239-8118)
- **Splash of Color** is the Beyond Pink TEAM's support group to meet the needs of women of color. These quarterly Meet, Mingle and Learn events are held at the Waterloo Public Library from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. A light meal is offered, sharing time and a speaker.
- The **Waverly Breast Cancer Support Group**. (Contact: Ann Henninger Trax 352-5108) There are also support groups available at many of the local churches.

For more information check out Beyond Pink TEAM website: www.cedarvalleybreastcancer.org

Anne Doyle Receives Susan Witwer Memorial Scholarship

“It has been one year since my surgery and I now think I can channel all of the emotions into a usable rage in order to help others.” That kind of passion led the Beyond Pink TEAM to choose Anne Doyle as the 2011 recipient of the Susan Witwer Memorial Scholarship to attend the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC. Anne, a breast cancer survivor and Allen School of Nursing International Admissions Counselor, wrote in her application, “Though I would like to conquer the moon right now starting a little smaller would be much more effective (we can work together to catch the moon soon).”

During the NBCC Advocacy conference Anne learned about NBCC's Breast Cancer Deadline 2020 including the following:

- By setting a deadline to end breast cancer by January 1, 2020, NBCC is no longer accepting hope as a solution
- NBCC is no longer satisfied with the status quo of watching more than 3 million women and men in the U.S. alone suffer from a diagnosis of breast cancer and far too many lose their lives to this disease
- Yes, the goal of ending breast cancer within the next decade is ambitious; however, many of our nation's most revered feats have been accomplished in shorter periods of time: building the transcontinental railroad, finding a vaccine for polio and putting a man on the moon
- Yes, the goal is ambitious, but is not impossible

Anne realized NBCC is the breast cancer organization conquering the moon and NBCC needed her help. She went on to apply to and attend the prestigious National Breast Cancer Coalition Project LEAD Institute, a five-day intensive science course for breast cancer advocates that covers the basics of cancer biology, genetics, epidemiology, research design, and advocacy. The course provides a foundation of scientific knowledge upon which participants can strengthen and empower themselves as activists. Beyond Pink TEAM is proud of Anne's commitment to end breast cancer.

Susan Witwer was also a passionate Beyond Pink TEAM breast cancer advocate and would have been pleased with Anne's commitment. Sue channeled her anger, passion and considerable advocacy skills toward passing the legislative priorities of the National Breast Cancer Coalition. After Sue attended her first NBCC Advocacy Conference in 2003, she went on to attend NBCC Team Leader Training so she could speak knowledgeably to Iowa's Senators and Representatives. She became a persistent and articulate breast cancer advocate; well known and respected by the staff of the Iowa Congressional staff. Sue died in December 2010. Her husband, two sons and daughter-in-law have generously funded the Susan Witwer Memorial Scholarship.

During the month of October for each Pink Ribbon Bagel sold at Cedar Falls and Waterloo bakery-cafes, Panera Bread of Iowa will donate 10 cents to the Beyond Pink TEAM.

A Survivor's Story by Donna O'Brien

I was diagnosed with breast cancer on November 17, 2008. It was my husband's 47th birthday and at the time, seemed like the most devastating day of my life. I was 45 years old.

I had surgery 3 days after my diagnosis and followed up with several months of chemotherapy, radiation and reconstructive surgery. Needless to say, 2009 was a challenging year. My youngest son was also graduating from high school, so I was trying not to have his senior year be filled with sadness and fear, yet show him that we can overcome crisis in our lives with faith, love and determination.

With the help of an amazing group of friends and family that supported me through this, I was able to get through it. My sister, Lorie, was at my house every single day. She didn't ask what I needed, she just did it. Her son, Connor, was 3 at the time and brought joy to me every day! I was blessed to have them both by my side. I also have wonderful parents and incredible girlfriends. They were constantly bringing my family meals or offering to help out in any way they could. I was overwhelmed by the amount of support I had. My two sons, Justin and Mac were 21 and 17 at the time of my diagnosis. They did absolutely anything they could for me, even though they were afraid and unsure of everything. It was a real life lesson for them and I think they both have become better young men for it. My husband, above all, was with me every step of the way. I will never be able to thank

him for his unwavering support. He was there – 24/7. He went to every single one of my treatments and was by my side through every surgery. He is the most unselfish person I have ever known in my life! I am so incredibly lucky to have him and I thank God every day for him. I truly believe that the support I had is why I was able to get through this.

While traveling this journey, I heard about the Beyond Pink Team. This organization does such wonderful things for women who don't have the level of support that I had. That's when I decided I had to do something to help.

For as long as I can remember, I have always loved to bake. So I came up with a recipe for a specialty cookie that would be unique that people could order for gifts or special events. I give a generous portion of the proceeds back to the Beyond Pink Team. These cookies are called Bambinos, and I now sell them for graduations, weddings, showers, birthday parties, Christmas gifts, corporate gifts, etc. My goal is to give back thousands to the Beyond Pink Team each year so please keep the Bambinos in mind for your next event, whether large or small! You are helping out women who truly need the help and getting a quality, tasty product as well.

Being a breast cancer survivor has changed my life completely. I am much more compassionate about others and what struggles they may be facing. I am so much more aware of how precious life is and I don't take life for granted. I used to be afraid to fly

but now take every opportunity I can to travel and see the world. My faith is stronger. I feel like I can accomplish anything that I set my mind to!

I have spoken to several women in the past 3 years who have been diagnosed with breast cancer, assuring them that they, too, with strength, courage, and faith, can get through this. I am almost 3 years cancer free and loving life and I now live by the motto that "God doesn't give us what we can handle, God helps us handle what we are given."

Calendar of Events

October 1 8:00 am Start
Pink Ribbon Run
Cedar Falls Library, Cedar Falls
Community Main Street
319-277-0213

October 3 1:30 pm
Touch of Courage
Breast Cancer Support Group
2101 Kimball Avenue, Waterloo
Dawn Colbert – 319-415-6430

October 4 1:30 pm
Care & Share Cancer Support Grp
Covenant Cancer Treatment Center
200 E Ridgeway, Waterloo

October 6 5-8:00 pm
Survivorship: Life After Cancer Treatment
Covenant Medical Center
Classrooms 1 & 2 (near Chapel)
West 9th, Waterloo
Register at 272-2273

October 8 9-11:00 am
Tulip Bulb Pickup
Covenant Cancer Treatment Center
200 E Ridgeway, Waterloo

October 10 1:30-3:30 pm
Look Good...Feel Better
RSVP to American Cancer Society
At 866-460-6551

October 13 4-8:00 pm
Grundy Center Girls Night Out
Benefit The Beyond Pink TEAM
Grundy Center downtown

October 22 9:00 am
Splash of Color Walk
Sullivan Park, Waterloo
Registration: 7:45-8:45 am

October 22 7:05 pm
Black Hawk Hockey
Breast Cancer Awareness Event
Young Arena, Waterloo

November 1 1:30 pm
Care & Share Cancer Support Grp

November 7 1:30 pm
Touch of Courage

November 10 5-7:00 pm
Splash of Color Event
Women of Color Breast Cancer
Survivor Support Group
Waterloo Public Library
Cathy – 319-493-8857

December 5 1:30 pm
Touch of Courage

December 6 1:30 pm
Care & Share Cancer Support Grp

December 10 1:30-3:30 p.m
Look Good, Feel Better
RSVP to American Cancer Society
866-460-6550

January 2
Touch of Courage

January 3 1:30 pm
Care & Share Cancer Support Grp

January 17 4:30-7:00 pm
Young Cancer Survivors Event
Cedar Falls Public Library
Cedar Falls

Resources

Information, support, counseling, and educational materials are available from the following:

Beyond Pink TEAM is a local breast cancer organization providing a variety of services. Our website lists services we provide as well as other services available in the Cedar Valley. www.cedarvalleybreastcancer.org

Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-Action is a local advocacy group taking action against breast cancer. www.iowabreastcancer.org

Living Beyond Breast Cancer includes a helpline, newsletter and information. Survivors Helpline: 888-753-5222 www.LBBC.org

Young Survival Coalition connects with other young women diagnosed with breast cancer. www.youngsurvival.org

Cancer Care is a national nonprofit organization offering counseling, support, financial assistance and education to individuals with cancer and their families. www.cancercare.org

Iowa Cancer Consortium offers cancer information and links to resources in Iowa. www.canceriowa.org

American Cancer Society offers cancer information and services. www.cancer.org.

National Breast Cancer Coalition The NBCC's mission is to eradicate breast cancer by focusing the government, research institutions and consumer advocates on breast cancer. It encourages advocacy for action and change. www.stopbreastcancer.org

M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, University of Texas offers patient and cancer information. www.mdanderson.org

Susan G. Komen for the Cure website offers cancer and social networking information and a newsletter on their website. www.komen.org

Iowa Breast Resource Guide is available on the Iowa Breast Cancer Education website. www.iowabreastcancer.org

Connect with us...

A donation for Touch of Courage is both needed and appreciated. All donations go to support the services of the Cedar Valley Cancer Committee and are tax deductible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

\$_____ amount of donation

General Donation Newsletter Donation NBCC Scholarship Fund

Make checks payable to the Cedar Valley Cancer Committee and send to 1607 Heath Street, Waterloo, IA 50703