Welcome to the fall 2016 issue of Life to the Fullest, the newsletter from the Swedish Cancer Institute (SCI) dedicated to cancer patients, survivors, and their family members and caregivers.

In this issue we have included important information that may help you at various points of your course of treatment. You will find articles discussing the role of an oncology social worker, various types of resources for young adults with cancer, as well as how to address the fear of recurrence. We hope you find the information helpful and we encourage you to save and share your Life to the Fullest newsletter.

You may feel relieved and fortunate when cancer therapy is over. However, this transition can also leave you feeling vulnerable, worried and undeniably anxious. Many people struggle with lingering symptoms from the cancer treatment in addition to worry or anxiety that the cancer might come back.

Fear and anxiety are normal human emotions that are not only related to cancer. However, the diagnosis of cancer naturally leads to contemplation of a deeper meaning in life. Perhaps for the first time one is faced with his or her own mortality. Although more people die of heart disease, there is significant cultural anxiety regarding what is still referred to as “the big C.” The media especially can deeply influence public perceptions of cancer and survivorship.

When one is afraid of a specific thing we refer to that as “fear,” whereas “anxiety” is usually more non-specific and identified as general unease. Psychologist and author Harriett Lerner believes that no matter what you call it,
what matters is how one copes. She believes that emotions such as fear and anxiety may be uncomfortable but also full of wisdom when we look underneath their jarring unpleasant sensations. When addressed rather than dismissed, they will often have less of a grip on us. Ultimately, ignoring or repressing these powerful emotions may interfere with healing and wellness. A common reaction to facing uncertainty or fear of cancer recurrence is to say things like “I can’t wait to get my old self back” or “I’m going to fight this thing” or “I’m going to do everything possible.” While these statements can sometimes make one feel more hopeful or even invincible, the truth is we are mortal human beings. Cancer is not the only life-threatening thing that happens to us. Once one moves through the experience of cancer, then what? Constantly fighting unseen dangers can leave one physically and emotionally exhausted, less able to focus or access creativity.

How can you recognize persistent fear or anxiety and especially know when to get help? The more obvious signs of fear or anxiety that might be interfering with day to day living may include:

- An inability to focus
- Insomnia — waking up in the middle of the night worried about the cancer
- Crying easily
- Feeling depressed

It is possible to move away from these persistent and complex emotions even though there is no guarantee that the cancer won’t come back. There are also many triggers that can activate these emotions, such as follow-up scans and testing, anniversary dates related to the diagnosis or treatment, someone you know recently diagnosed with cancer, hearing about celebrities and their struggles and defeats with cancer.

Karen Hartman, a social worker at Memorial Sloan Kettering, has identified helpful tips for managing and lessening this fear of recurrence. She recommends the following strategies:

- Identify triggers and have a plan for how to cope with them (for example, anticipate how you’re going to get through the day of a follow-up appointment and possibly the days leading up to it)
- Plan distracting activities and remember how you’ve dealt with stress in the past
- Talk about your fear with others who can validate how you feel
- Focus on wellness — consider seeing a naturopath, join Team Survivor Northwest, or learn a new activity or exercise routine

- Consider counseling, group therapy or mindfulness classes
- Cultivate a sense of self-compassion and patience with yourself

A visit to the Cancer Survivorship Clinic at the Swedish Cancer Institute may be a good way to initiate discussion and support for these fears. Call to schedule an appointment: 206-860-6488.

Resources available at Swedish include:

- Classes such as Mindfulness Meditation and others promoting relaxation, health and healing: Swedish.org/services/cancer-institute/patient-support-resources

Other recommended resources:

- Team Survivor Northwest offers fitness and health programs for women Team survivormw.org 206-732-8350
- Cancer Lifeline provides classes and support groups including two program offerings that may be helpful—Transforming the War Against Cancer Into a Treasure Hunt and Coping With Cancer & Post Traumatic Stress cancerlifeline.org 206-297-2100
- Harmony Hill presents cancer retreats for health and healing Harmonyhill.org 360-898-2363

References


Patti Kwok, ARNP, Ph.D., is a Swedish Cancer Institute advanced registered nurse practitioner whose specialty is working with people who have completed their cancer treatment.
Were you aware that a social worker is part of your health care team at the Swedish Cancer Institute? Generally, people are familiar with the role of community social workers, but are a bit unsure what the role of an oncology social worker is. We would like to take this opportunity to define that role so you can receive the best possible, most well rounded care available to you. Your social worker is here to assist you with non-medical cancer-related concerns. These types of concerns could range from emotional support to finances, and everything in between. People often find they benefit from social work at many different times throughout their care. With that in mind, all of the information shared in this article may not apply to you today, but may become of interest in the future.

Oncology social workers are here to be an ally and advocate for you. During treatment many people report feeling pulled in several directions. For instance, you may find that you feel pressure from others in your life to make choices they want for you. These influences can come from many different areas of a person’s life. Common influences are loved ones, your medical care team and even insurance companies. We acknowledge that these influences have good intentions, and are also aware that they can feel overwhelming at times. The goal of the social worker is to make sure your desires and wishes are given a voice and are heard.

Beyond advocacy, a social worker will be able to guide you to many resources:

- Emotional support for patients and loved ones, such as coping and communication strategies, counseling referrals and peer support resources
- Quality of life resources, information and coordination such as chore services, transportation resources, palliative care and hospice services
- Legal documents such as advance directives, living wills, durable power of attorney and POLST (Physicians Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment)
- Financial assessments and insurance information and resources
- Support services, such as support groups, exercise and nutrition resources, appearance resources like wigs and head coverings, and survivorship planning

At this point you may be wondering what to expect if you decide to meet with an oncology social worker. They will be asking you many questions with the purpose of getting to know you, the areas where assistance may be helpful for you, and to find out what resources you might qualify for. Answering the questions fully and honestly helps the social worker gather the information they need to assist you, and give you the best care possible. If this sounds uncomfortable to you, it may set your mind at ease to know that what you discuss with your social worker is kept confidential. Your confidentiality is protected by the law, and by the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. If confidentiality is a concern, you are encouraged to discuss this with your social worker, so the two of you can create an environment that feels safe for the level of sharing you wish to do.

Social work can be a tremendously positive source of support during your treatment. Each circumstance is unique, and because of this social work is a very personalized type of care. To get the most out of this service contact your social worker to set up an appointment. You can access your social worker by asking your oncologist for a referral, or by calling the information line at the Swedish campus where you receive care:

- First Hill campus 206-386-3228
- Edmonds campus 425-673-8328
- Ballard campus 206-781-6359
- Issaquah campus 425-313-4224
A recipe for good health

Quick and Easy Corn and Shrimp Soup

Ingredients
1 onion
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 green bell pepper, cored and chopped
1 (8 ounce) package fat-free cream cheese, softened
2 (10¾ ounce) cans cream of shrimp soup or corn chowder soup or combination
2 (14¾ ounce) cans cream-style corn
2 cups skim milk
1 (10 ounce) can diced tomatoes and green chiles
1 pound medium shrimp, peeled
Chopped green onions, optional

Instructions
1. Coat a heavy, large pot with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Sauté the onions, garlic and green bell pepper until tender, about 5 minutes.
3. Stir in the cream cheese.
4. Add soup, cream-style corn, milk, tomatoes and shrimp.
5. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and cook until the shrimp is cooked, about 7-10 minutes.
When reheating soup, if too thick, add more milk.
Servings: Makes 8 servings

Nutritional information per serving
238 calories
20 grams protein
41 grams carbohydrates
2 grams dietary fiber
1528 milligrams sodium
94 milligrams cholesterol
4 grams fat (2 grams saturated fat)

Courtesy of Eating Well Through Cancer

Resources for Young Adults with Cancer

By: Megan Peterson, OSW Intern

Young adults with cancer often have different needs and challenges than children or older adults with cancer. Up until recently the available resources came in a one-size-fits-all approach. Young adulthood is a time when many people are defining who they are socially, emotionally and professionally. A cancer diagnosis can derail previously laid plans. The completion of education and the ability to work may become a challenge. This age group, defined as ages 15-39, faces a wide range of emotional, physical, and social concerns that are somewhat unique to them, such as dating, marriage, preserving fertility, parenthood, continuing education and employment. Fortunately, this has been gaining awareness, resulting in resources specifically for the young adult population.

Stupid Cancer (Stupidcancer.org) is an example of an organization focused on the young adult population. It was founded by Matthew Zachary in 2007, a brain cancer survivor. Stupidcancer describes themselves as, “The dominant support community and social influencer for this underserved population and now serves as a bullhorn for the young adult cancer movement.”

Critical Mass (Criticalmass.org) is another organization focused on the needs of young adults. On their website they identify as, “A community-powered advocacy organization on a mission to transform the care and treatment of young adults with cancer.”

Thrive Through Cancer (Thrivethroughcancer.net) is aimed at helping young adults with cancer as well. Thrive was founded in Seattle by Rose Ibarra when she was six months into her first cancer diagnosis. Thrive Through Cancer aims to bring young adults together, provide them with age-appropriate resources and give them a place to share their story. Thrive has an online presence, including Facebook. They also offer local meet-up events. During these events, young adults can connect with others their age that are going through treatment or have survived cancer. Thrive provides complimentary Thrive bags filled with products for young adult cancer patients. These totes are available at all Swedish Cancer Institute network sites in the Cancer Education Centers.

There are many topic-specific resources available as well. If you are interested in learning about more resources for young adults with cancer, please visit a SCI Cancer Education Center. Feel free to request a free copy of the SCI produced handout titled Resources for Young Adults Living with Cancer.
The Swedish Cancer Institute offers programs to assist cancer patients, survivors, their families, friends and caregivers in making treatment decisions, managing symptoms and accessing supportive programs to help the mind, body and spirit to heal. Call 1-800-SWEDISH (1-800-793-3474) or visit Swedish.org/classes for more information or to register for a class.

**Active Women, Healthy Women**
Women of all fitness levels are encouraged to join this certified instructor-led class. From cancer patients to survivors, there is an exercise activity appropriate for you. Co-sponsored by Team Survivor Northwest, this class focuses on stretching, strength training and cardio workouts. **Ten sessions.**

**American Cancer Society: Look Good Feel Better**
This class focuses on skin care, cosmetics, hair care and hair loss and is designed for women undergoing cancer treatment.

**CanCan**
CanCan is a free, one-hour workshop focused on ovarian and breast health education. A health instructor will discuss risk factors, family history, signs and symptoms, screening methods, early detection, role of nutrition and exercise, and cancer myths. In addition, an ovarian or breast cancer survivor will share her journey. You will leave the workshop educated and empowered to be proactive about your health. **Six sessions.**

**Cancer and Finances 101**
If you or a loved one receive a cancer diagnosis, money is likely the last thing you want to think about. Taking control of your financial concerns right from the start can help alleviate some of that stress. The class will help you understand the direct and indirect costs of treatment, and introduce you to community resources and governmental programs that are available to assist with health care costs. **Don't Keep Putting It Off**
An oncology social worker will explain the elements of end-of-life planning, including medical power of attorney, living wills and hospice. Relevant handouts will be provided.

**Gentle Yoga**
Create balance in the body, breath and mind in this therapeutic class with registered yoga instructor Ann Ford. No experience necessary. Bring a mat and blanket. **Six sessions.**

**Mindfulness Meditation**
Join us for a class that focuses on mindfulness meditation to help manage stress, pain and illness.

**Principles of T’ai Chi – Mini Series**
Join this mini-series to learn simple movements to ground, balance and relax. The Principles of T’ai Chi provides an opportunity to learn an awareness practice for centering and calming the mind and body. There is currently good research on the benefits of T’ai Chi for balance, stress reduction, pain, anxiety and depression. No prior experience is necessary.

**Recovering After Conventional Cancer Treatment**
Join naturopathic physician Dan Labriola for a class focused on natural ways to help your body heal and repair after cancer treatment. Co-sponsored by Northwest Natural Health.

**What’s next? After Your Treatment is Finished.**
Now that you have completed your treatment, it is time to live life to the fullest. Come and learn about the resources available to you in the SCI Survivorship Program and meet the survivorship team.
Earlier this year, the Swedish Cancer Institute opened a new clinical trial center named the Robert and Jean Reid Family Innovative Therapeutics & Research Unit (ITU). This state-of-the-art clinical unit is focused on early-phase clinical trials and investigational therapies. These therapies are driven by the SCI Personalized Medicine Program.

“This is a tremendous resource for our community and was made possible by the Reid family and other generous donors,” says Thomas D. Brown, MD, MBA, executive director, Swedish Cancer Institute. “I am grateful for the very large team of caregivers that worked diligently to make this important project a reality.”

The unit will not only expand clinical trials and research programs for cancer at Swedish, it will also double the number of early phase I clinical trials. Patients at the Swedish Cancer Institute will now have access to more new, ground-breaking cancer treatments and technologies.

The Reid Family ITU is designed to be patient and family centered. It includes the highest level of space planning and technology to support the administration of new therapies, and high level monitoring for patients. The space includes: a calming lobby for patients and family members with educational material, a family kitchen, 16 treatment chairs, five private rooms — including one with positive and negative ambient pressure capability—a laboratory, data management space, a conference room and a pharmacy.

For more information about the Robert and Jean Reid Family Innovative Therapeutics & Research Unit at the Swedish Cancer Institute, please call 206-386-3232.

Support Groups at SCI

The Swedish Cancer Institute offers a variety of support groups. The groups provide an opportunity to meet with others having experiences similar to your own. Each group is facilitated by an experienced Swedish Cancer Institute support group facilitator and is open to all patients and caregivers, whether you are receiving care at Swedish Medical Center or another cancer facility in the community. Please call 206-386-3228 for more information.

**Living with Cancer Support Group**
A group for those living with any type of cancer

- **Swedish Edmonds:** The first and third Wednesdays of each month, 1-2:30 p.m., Radiation Oncology Building, 2nd floor
- **Swedish First Hill:** Every Thursday, 1:30-3:00 p.m., Arnold Pavilion, A-floor West
- **Swedish Issaquah:** The second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, 10-11:30 a.m., 2nd floor Conference Room Center

**Caregivers Support Group**
A drop-in group for caregivers.

- **Swedish Edmonds:** The first and third Wednesdays of each month, 1-2:30 p.m., Radiation Oncology Building, 2nd floor
- **Swedish First Hill:** Every Thursday, 1:30-3 p.m., Arnold Pavilion, A-floor West

**Gynecological Cancers Support Group**
A group for women with gynecological cancers

- **Swedish First Hill:** Last Tuesday of each month, 10:30 a.m.-noon, Arnold Pavilion, A-floor West

**Prostate Cancer Educational Support Group**
For more information, please call Leo Ward, prostate cancer survivor, at 425-957-7440.

- **Swedish First Hill:** Third Thursday of the month, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Arnold Pavilion, A-floor West

**ABC — After Breast Cancer: What’s Next?**
An eight-week group for women following breast cancer treatment. Advance registration is required for this group. Please call 1-800-SWEDISH (1-800-793-3474) to register.

- **Swedish First Hill:** Wednesdays, Sept. 28-Nov. 2, 4:30-6 p.m.
- **Swedish Edmonds:** Thursdays, Sept. 15-Oct. 20, 4:30-6 p.m.
Creative Expression Programs

Art Therapy: An Approach for Healing
Art therapy is a combination of counseling and expressive arts and can help you reduce stress, increase self-awareness, explore feelings and build positive coping skills. Sessions are confidential, supportive and individualized. No experience or confidence in art-making necessary. All materials provided. Please call 206-215-6178 for more information.

Feel the Beat
Drop by to meet with SCI’s music therapists about unique and individualized ways that you can incorporate music into your everyday life to promote relaxation and wellness while reducing pain, anxiety and stress.

• Swedish Issaquah: Medical Office Building, SCI Cancer Education Center
  Every second Monday of the month, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Healing Arts Group
Experience the healing benefits of art-making in a supportive setting. This drop-in art therapy group is open to cancer patients, their family members and caregivers. No experience or confidence in art-making necessary. All materials provided. Questions? Please call 206-215-6178.

• Swedish First Hill: Arnold Pavilion

Knit for Life
This network of volunteers uses knitting as a healing experience to enhance the lives of cancer patients, their family members and caregivers during treatment and recovery. It provides a supportive environment for beginners and experienced knitters. All materials are provided. For more information, call 206-386-3200.

• Swedish Edmonds: SCI, first floor lobby
  Tuesdays, noon-2 p.m.

• Swedish First Hill: SCI, Arnold Pavilion, first floor lobby
  Thursdays, 1-3 p.m.

• Swedish First Hill: SCI, Arnold Pavilion, True Family Women’s Cancer Center, Healing Forum, fifth floor
  Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-noon

• Swedish Issaquah: Medical Office Building, main lobby (in front of the fireplace)
  Mondays, 1-3 p.m.

Music and Wellness
Join us in a group setting to experience how music can improve your mood and promote healthy coping skills. This group focuses on restoration, meditation and rejuvenation through music. No music confidence or prior experience required.

• Swedish First Hill: SCI, Arnold Pavilion
  True Family Women’s Cancer Center, Healing Forum, fifth floor
  Thursdays, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Ukulele Club
Experience how playing the ukulele can improve your mood while reducing stress and anxiety. We’re here to have fun and spread the music love! No prior music experience required. This drop-in group is open to patients, family members and caregivers.

• Swedish First Hill: SCI, Arnold Pavilion
  True Family Women’s Cancer Center, Healing Forum, fifth floor
  Wednesdays, 2-3 p.m.