

Touch of Courage

. . . Connection

July 2017



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CARING FOR YOURSELF WHEN CARING FOR A LOVED ONE WITH CANCER

By Emma Peterson, Chaplain, Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare – Covenant Hospital

When you're caring for a loved one battling cancer, you probably know every detail about their treatment and health. You can list their medications with ease, and you know just how to soothe whatever side effects their grueling treatment has saddled them with. You know how much they're eating, whether or not they're sleeping, and if they're spirits are up, or if they've been blue lately. But do you know how you're doing? Caregivers often lose touch with their own well-being when they focus all of their energy on caring for someone else. Here are five signs that you may be careening towards caregiver burnout, and what you can do to stop it.

1- You're seriously emotional, or totally numb - You may feel angry and frustrated one minute, and despairing and sad the next. You feel like your emotions are out of control, or maybe you don't feel much of anything. This could indicate emotional exhaustion. Pay attention if you feel like you're drowning in an ocean of tears, or find yourself losing your temper over little things.

2 - You can't sleep, or you can't get out of bed - Wacky sleep patterns often indicate burnout. Do you feel exhausted after a full night's sleep? Or do you wake up in the middle of the night, and can't get back to bed? If your sleep habits have shifted dramatically, it could indicate a high level of stress.

3 - You keep getting sick - Stress and burnout lowers our immune system. If you can't seem to stay healthy, and are sniffing your way through summer, it could indicate caregiver fatigue.

4 - Your friends say you seem "out of it" - Do your friends and family comment that you "don't seem like yourself," or are they always asking you what's wrong? Are you snapping at people over nothing? Or worse, are you backing out of plans or avoiding seeing people because you're so exhausted and overwhelmed? If the people who know you best suggest you're acting differently, it may be time to listen to them.

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Where Are They Now? . . . In 2017, we will be sharing with our readers how survivors are doing years after their diagnosis. This is the story from 7 year survivor – Angela Hamiton.

My cancer was found during a routine mammogram in July 2009. Hearing the words “You have cancer” started the roller coaster ride of a lifetime. The many hills, tunnels and straight-aways keep cancer as a challenge to overcome and a motivator to try new things.

During my treatments I had the best support system – a patient and loving husband, two awesome kids, extended family, great friends and neighbors, yet I still felt alone. I needed the emotional support that could only come from someone who had also heard those dreadful words. In January 2010 I attended my first Touch of Courage and my first Young Cancer Survivors support groups – both times shaking in my shoes and emotional. I quickly realized that even though our stories may be different we were all on that same roller coaster – lives interrupted, sleepless nights, racing minds and a “sisterhood” that I really didn’t understand until it became my own.

Being around other survivors helped me put my diagnosis and treatment plan into perspective. It helped me move forward and want to help others get up and over the hills of cancer. It also caused me to reflect on what was important to me and to not wait – take action to reach your goals, fulfill your bucket list, and find joy in every day. My diagnosis also had my family riding on the roller coaster and so we decided to make some lifestyle changes. Not only did we pay more attention to the food going into our bodies but also our activity levels. My husband started running while I was undergoing treatments to get into shape and ran his first half marathon. Although

running was out of the question for me at that time, we decided that I would run my first half marathon if I was still cancer-free at 5 years. Once I finished the clinical trial and it seemed as if I was coasting on a straight-away, I began running and training for that half marathon. Crossing that finish line was amazing – we pushed cancer down that hill!

I continue to see my oncologist every 6 months and continue my preventative checks. Throughout the years I have had many trying times with suspicious areas and at times felt like a pin cushion. I feel blessed that those hills were conquered and I have had no recurrence of the disease! My health is good and I am thankful for that every day. As I continue on this roller coaster, my hope is to be there for others who are still climbing the hills, help them find joy on the straight-aways, and wave with our hands in the air during the downhill ride. We are survivors and we got this!

Touch of Courage Support Group

Breast Cancer Support Group meets the 1st Monday of each month (unless a holiday, then the following Monday) at 1:30 pm in the Kimball Ridge Center, 2101 Kimball Avenue, Waterloo. Contact Pat Buls at 319.232-8691 or plbuls45@gmail.com

Young Cancer Survivors

Meet, Mingle and Learn is an educational event for all young (and young at heart) women with any type of cancer. It is held the 3rd Tuesday of January, April, June and September at Cedar Valley Unitarian Universalist, 3912 Cedar Heights Drive, Cedar Falls, Contact Gabbi DeWitt at 319-292-2225 or gdewitt@co.black-hawk.ia.us



Saturday, October 7th, marks the 11th Annual Pink Ribbon Run. The event will be held in downtown Cedar Falls. The Survivor tent, team sites and other festivities will be held in the parking lot of the Cedar Falls Public Library and Community Center.

The Pump Haus Pub & Grill, 311 Main Street, Cedar Falls, will be hosting the Pink Ribbon Run Kick-off on Tuesday, July 11th from 4-7 p.m. Individuals can register and receive a thank you gift from the Pump Haus. Light refreshments will be served.

Beginning July 1, 2017, all individuals can register online by visiting beyondpinkteam.org and follow the link provided. Registration costs are \$30* until September 8. After September 8 registration is \$35.

**online processing fees not included.* Registration fees do include official run t-shirt if registered by September 8th.

Breast cancer survivors receive a complimentary registration thanks to the Survivor Sponsor, Community Auto Group. Just click on the “I am a breast cancer survivor” box when registering.

Participants can honor or memorialize a family member, co-worker, friend or neighbor with a yard sign for \$30. These must be ordered by September 18th.

Come join in the fun and run/walk to support and honor breast cancer survivors in the Cedar Valley and surrounding communities.

The Community Continues to Fundraise for the Beyond Pink TEAM



Jeanne Olson is accepting a check from Turner of Carpetland USA from the proceeds of a promotional sale held earlier. Thank you Carpetland USA!



Columbus High School Softball team held their annual "Pink Out" game to benefit the BPT. Breast cancer survivor, Carol Luce, threw out the first pitch. Thank you, Columbus Sailors, for "Striking Out Cancer" for the Cedar Valley!



PINK OUT!

JULY 22 – 6:35 P.M.
Gates open at 5:30 p.m.

The Waterloo Bucks will wear pink jerseys sponsored by Breast Care Center, Bryce Olsen, & Great Clips that will be auctioned off to benefit the Beyond Pink TEAM! Funds raised from the 50/50 raffle will also go to the Beyond Pink TEAM!

Post-game Fireworks Extravagnaza by VGM

Breast Cancer Survivors can reserve complimentary tickets by contacting the Breast Care Center, 319.833.6100

Living Green



Shared By Gabbi DeWitt

Weed-Be-Gone

Imagine no more nasty chemicals and no more weeds in your backyard! Here is a "How to Make DIY Weed Killer" that is natural and toxin free. The best part? This recipe is so simple to make and works like magic.

1 Gallon Vinegar

2 Cups Epson Salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ Cup Dawn Dish Soap (the blue original)

It will kill anything you spray it on. Just mix and spray in the morning, after the dew has evaporated. Walk away. Go back after dinner and the weeds are gone!

Cheaper than anything you can buy anywhere! Never buy Round-up again!

Often we receive information from individuals, groups, organizations, or businesses that would like to donate to or fundraise to benefit the Beyond Pink TEAM. We are always excited to partner with the community in this way. We have drafted guidelines to facilitate these opportunities which can be found on our website at www.beyondpinkteam.org to make the process easier or you can contact Lisa Ellermann at mamgrl.lw@gmail.com.

Support Group Meeting Dates

July 10, 1:30 p.m.

Touch of Courage
Breast Cancer Support Group
 2101 Kimball Ave., Waterloo
 Pat – 319-232-8691

July 11, 1:30 p.m.

Care & Share Cancer Support Group
 Covenant Cancer Treatment Center
 200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo
 Jessica – 319-272-2816

August 7, 1:30 p.m.

Touch of Courage
Breast Cancer Support Group
 2101 Kimball Ave., Waterloo
 Pat – 319-232-8691

August 8, 1:30 p.m.

Care & Share Cancer Support Group
 Covenant Cancer Treatment Center
 200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo
 Jessica – 319-272-2816

August 10, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Splash of Color – Women of Color
Breast Cancer Support Group
 Waterloo Public Library
 Cathy – 319-504-2703 for details

August 14, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Look Good ...Feel Better
Hair – Make-up – Nails – Skin
 Covenant Cancer Treatment Center
 200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo
 To reserve a seat call 1-800-227-2345

September 5, 1:30 p.m.

Care & Share Cancer Support Group
 Covenant Cancer Treatment Center
 200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo
 Jessica – 319-272-2816

September 11, 1:30 p.m.

Touch of Courage
Breast Cancer Support Group
 2101 Kimball Ave., Waterloo
 Pat – 319-232-8691

September 19, 4:30-7:00 p.m.

**Young Cancer Survivors – Meet,
 Mingle and Learn**
 Cedar Valley Unitarian Universalist
 3912 Cedar Heights Dr., Cedar Falls
 Gabbi – 319-292-2225

October 2, 1:30 p.m.

Touch of Courage
Breast Cancer Support Group
 2101 Kimball Ave., Waterloo
 Pat – 319-232-8691

October 3, 1:30 p.m.

Care & Share Cancer Support Group
 Covenant Cancer Treatment Center
 200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo
 Jessica – 319-272-2816



On April 20, 2017, the second annual Ignite the Cancer Conversation focused on the environment. The Beyond Pink TEAM challenged the attendees of the 2017 Ignite the Cancer Conversation—Environmental Edition to set action-oriented goals at three levels: 1) a personal goal, 2) a community level goal, and 3) a goal for future generations.

Science-in-Action!

by: Eric Giddens

My personal goal was to test for radon. I first tested my house for radon eleven years ago when I bought it. Because the results were just below the “safe level” of 4.0 pCi/L, I hadn’t tested it again since then. Gail Orcutt presented information at *Ignite the Cancer Conversation* saying that 4.0 pCi/L, the EPA’s threshold level for recommending the installation of a mitigation system, is equivalent to smoking eight cigarettes a day. Research suggests that the action level should really be around 2.0 pCi/L. Ms. Orcutt also stated that seven out of ten homes are above the 4.0 level, and that radon levels fluctuate constantly so testing should be repeated regularly. All of this

information was a jolt to me personally, so I bought a test kit at the end of the event. The results of my new test were 4.6 pCi/L, so I had a radon system installed. Done!

My community goal was inspired mostly by Dr. Enshayan’s talk concerning the danger of using lawn pesticides which in almost all cases are only for cosmetic purposes and are therefore totally unnecessary. We need a cultural paradigm shift in our part of the world on this issue and others. The only way to accomplish this is to have conversations...to talk about it being okay to have “weedy” or diverse lawns. Then we can hopefully move on to other perhaps less comfortable conversations regarding public health and environmental issues. If people can begin to see things differently and begin to understand that it’s not dirty or less good or lazy or un-neighborly to have a diverse lawn, then maybe they can begin to imagine that it’s actually healthy and good to have a diverse lawn, and THEN maybe they can begin to think differently about bigger things like ag and energy and public health policies that we need to change as well. So my goal at the community level is to continue to talk about the virtues of things like diverse lawns and to try to get people to view the world a little bit differently.

My goal for future generations is all linked to policy. I will work to advocate for policies at all levels of government that strengthen regulations related to public health. Policies related to chemical regulation, water protection, energy production and consumption, and lots of other environmental issues need to be addressed from Washington, D.C. down to City Hall. From strengthening major federal environmental laws like the Clean

Continued on next page, Science in Action

Science in Action, continued from previous page

Water Act to enacting building codes that require radon mitigation in every home that's built in Iowa, there's plenty of work to be done and I am committed to speaking out. We know what needs to be done...in many cases we simply need to act.

I am a Program Manager at the Center for Energy and Environmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa. One of my primary responsibilities is to manage a program called UNI Conservation Corps which is a part of a broad initiative called *Science-in-Action*. The premise of *Science-in-Action* is that science has given us the knowledge and the tools to solve most of the environmental problems that we face, but we are simply not acting on what we know. Based on that premise, we are engaging UNI faculty, staff, and students in projects with community partners to implement science-based best-practices that address a host of environmental issues.



Caring for Yourself, continued from Page 1

5 - You can't remember the last time you did something for yourself- All of your socks have holes in them, and your fingernails are ragged and worn out. You haven't been to the gym for so long your membership has lapsed. The new novel you've been meaning to read has an inch of dust on its cover. If you can't remember the last time you saw a friend for lunch, or went to church, or yoga class, it may indicate you're stretched too thin.

So what can you do if you're feeling the effects of caregiver burnout? Here are five ways to take care of yourself.

1 - Talk to someone! - Talking is how our brains work out a problem, and relieve stress. Don't bottle up your feelings or try to ignore them! Being a caregiver is HARD! Make an appointment with a therapist. Request a visit from a chaplain the next time you take your loved one to the doctor. Invite a friend for a walk and let them know you need a listening ear.

2 - Banish guilt! - Don't feel guilty about needing a break. Caring for a loved one with cancer is one of the most taxing things anyone can do. Be easy on yourself. Don't beat yourself up if you feel tired, or grouchy. When you start to spin in to a cycle of guilt and negative self-talk, stop, breathe

and re-set your mind. You deserve kindness, especially from yourself.

3 - Self-care is soul care! - You must do at least one thing each day that is only for you. Get a manicure. Spend 45 minutes doing light exercise. Call an old friend. Take a bath. "You can't pour from an empty cup." Replenish your resources by taking the time each day to care for yourself.

4 - Practice mindfulness! - Breathe in. Count to 3. Breathe out. Count to 3. Repeat as necessary. Developing small practices of mindfulness re-sets our brains. Allow yourself to breathe, relax, and release tension, worry and stress. Develop a practice of mindfulness. Each night before bed, list three things you are grateful for. Try not to become overwhelmed by negativity.

5 - Ask for help! - You can't do this alone. Establish a network of relatives, friends or people in the community you can call on. Schedule a family meeting to discuss how responsibilities can be delegated. Make it clear you aren't available to host the Labor Day barbeque, or run the church can drive. When people offer to help, take them up on it! Carry a to-do list so you can accept gracious offers of support. Join a local or online support group so you can connect with others and gather ideas for coping better. Create a system of supportive community to hold you up when you feel like falling down.



Radon testing kits are available at the Black Hawk County Health Department, 1407 Independence Avenue, Waterloo, 5th Floor. Cost is \$8.00 each or \$15.00 for 2 kits.



Like "Iowa Breast Cancer Deadline 2020 Action Network" on Facebook to receive updates and "Call to action" notices.



MISSION – *Beyond Pink TEAM is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide breast cancer prevention, education, support and advocacy for comprehensive, quality health care for ALL in the Cedar Valley and surrounding communities.*

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.beyondpinkTEAM.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.breastcancerdeadline2020.org

National Comprehensive Cancer Network® (NCCN) provides state-of-the-art treatment information in easy-to-understand language to people with cancer and their caregivers. NCCN.org/patients

National LGBT Cancer Network works to improve the lives of LGBT cancer survivors and those at risk. www.cancer-network.org

National Cancer Institute's website offers information about cancer, breast cancer, clinical trials, cancer statistics, research and funding, and the latest news. They will also answer your questions by calling 1-800-4CANCER. www.cancer.gov

Connect with us . . . Your support financially or through volunteering is both needed and appreciated. Please feel free to complete the following and forward to Cedar Valley Cancer Committee at the address listed below.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

I would like to participate with the Beyond Pink TEAM by:

- Writing a survivor story for the newsletter Making phone calls and sending emails to policy makers for breast cancer issues
- Become part of the Breast Cancer Advocacy Network
- Volunteering: *(check all that apply)*
- Assist with Support Groups Education (Health Fairs/Presentations)
- Development (Publicity) Advocacy – Deadline 2020/Ignite the Cancer Conversation
- Events (Fundraisers, Annual Luncheon, Projects and More)
- Make a donation. Make checks payable to Beyond Pink TEAM. *(All donations are tax deductible)*
- BPT Fund Advocacy Fund Area of Need

Touch of Courage . . . Connection

Cedar Valley Cancer Committee
1753 W Ridgeway Ave, Suite 104
Waterloo, IA 50701
www.beyondpinkteam.org