

The Right Support, at the Right Time, in the Right Way

Sonja relies on the support of family, friends and community



Fear, uncertainty, and a slight sense of relief to have a diagnosis were some of my reactions when I first learned that I had colon cancer in May 2017. Six weeks later a CT scan showed that the cancer had metastasized. I felt intense sadness at the thought that my time with my children and my husband might be very short but the care and thoughtfulness of the Vancouver medical oncology team also gave me hope. Close to forty chemotherapy cycles later, I feel stronger than I did at the beginning and have a deep sense that life is still worthwhile.

With many more treatment options for advanced cancer, a diagnosis is not the immediate death sentence it once was, but can be the beginning of a long journey. Knowing that my cancer is not curable, but treatable makes it more like living with a chronic condition than fighting a one-time battle.

Having cancer has made me more aware that people do not go through life alone. My spouse and I are lucky to work at a place with good benefits and flexible work time. We also have the support of family, neighbours, colleagues, and church community. Ongoing chemotherapy takes an emotional toll – with nausea and heightened sensitivity. It has helped me to see the world through our children’s hopes and interests, and to know that the support programs that have helped our family will be there for other cancer patients as well.

Online Support at Coping with Cancer

Are you looking for ways to makeover your meals?

New dietitian-approved meal make-over videos.

[Go to Nutrition Support.](#)



How about trying something new to help manage stress?

New counsellor-led video for managing stress, “The Body Scan”

[Go to Managing Stress](#)



New financial info booklet!

The Financial Information for Cancer Patients booklet has been updated.

Patients can get a copy at Patient & Family Counselling.

Or [download](#) a copy from the BC Cancer website. Go to Coping with Cancer, Practical Support.



Advance Care Planning (ACP) Workshop

Helping you plan for a time when you can no longer speak for yourself or make your own health care decisions.

April 18th 3-5pm

Fairmont Boardroom

6th Floor, 750 W. Broadway, Vancouver

Register [online](#) or call 604-877-6000

ext. 672193. Option of attending via Webex (computer based).

New drop-in support group in Vancouver

A counsellor-led relaxation and music support group is available if you (patient or support person) are struggling with increased anxiety, depression and/or stress. You can attend by yourself or with a support person. You do not need to register. Phone 604-877-6000 to learn more.

Judi from Kelowna found meaning by giving back



I was diagnosed the first time with breast cancer in April 2008. I was a full-time student getting ready to defend my Master's thesis. When I finished treatment, I was showered with bubbles and I was so happy to walk out of the cancer clinic with my new –found freedom.

At my six month follow-up appointment, my doctor thought she felt something unusual and I was sent for core biopsies. Although all was good, I began a downward emotional spiral. I had an extremely supportive family but they didn't know how to help me anymore. I wasn't interested in finishing my Master's degree.

I was lucky to find a course called Managing Life with Cancer. I was able to speak with other people who had been through a similar experience. One of the gifts this course gave me was a true understanding that we are all going to die. As soon as I was able to accept this, I was truly able to start living again. I successfully defended my Master's thesis.

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer again in 2012, I wasn't as scared as the first time. After the initial shock, I took control of my treatment. I had my chemo bag that was full of items to help me. When I finished treatment this time, I didn't feel as lost as I did the first time. I started a support group and I became a laughter yoga leader. I also became a facilitator for Self-Management BC where I lead programs for Chronic Conditions, Chronic Pain, and Cancer: Thriving and Surviving. One way my life has been given meaning is by being able to give back to other people who are dealing with cancer. One way my life has been given meaning is by being able to give back to other people who are dealing with cancer.

Indigenous Cancer Care in Prince George

Indigenous cancer patients and their families living in the North have support for ...

- learning about services to help with traveling for treatment
- navigating complex medical information
- spiritual or cultural needs
- coping with difficult emotions



Laura Nordin, Indigenous Counsellor

To make an appointment with the Indigenous Counsellor call 250-645-7300.

Are you facing a difficult medical decision? An ethics consultation may help

- Uncertain or confused about what treatment options or plan of care is best for you or your loved one?
- Questions about a person's role in making health care decisions.
- Concerns about continuing, stopping or refusing treatment.
- Issues regarding patient rights. Different opinions about treatment goals, the plan of care or end of life decision-making.

The PHSA Clinical Ethics team provides confidential support to patients and families facing difficult medical decisions. We do not make decisions for you. We meet with you, your family and health care staff to identify and help balance different interests and values. We provide the opportunity for a discussion that is safe, respectful and fair. Call us at 604-875-2360 or toll-free (within BC) 1-888-300-3088 ext. 2360 to make an appointment for an ethics consultation. To learn more online go to BC Cancer website, search clinical ethics. www.bccancer.bc.ca/our-services/services/clinical-ethics.

We have been listening!



You have told us it is hard to find support program information on our website. Chris Ho, co-chair of the Vancouver Regional Patient Experience Council, was actively involved in our new Support Programs web page. Check out the new look go to www.bccancer.bc.ca/supportprograms.

Our Services / Services / Support Programs

Support Programs

Looking for cancer support? Click a button below to see programs offered at our cancer centres. Click a program name to learn more and find out how you can register.

[Abbotsford](#) [Kelowna](#)
[Prince George](#) [Surrey](#)
[Vancouver](#) [Victoria](#)

BC Cancer – Abbotsford

- Art in the Afternoon
- Children's Expressive Arts Program
- Relaxation

BC Cancer – Kelowna

- Exercise and Fitness Group
- Job Search Program
- Laughter for the Health of it (Laughter Yoga)
- Managing Life with Cancer (Interactive Education Sessions)

Donate to the BC Cancer Foundation

Practical support

Counselling and resources for self-management are available for patients and their families. Visit "Practical Support" to learn more.

Emotional support

Your need for emotional support will vary during each stage of cancer and cancer treatments. Visit "Emotional Support" to learn more.

Other support options

Unable to attend a support program at one of our six regional centres? Visit the websites below for cancer support resources.

Anxiety BC