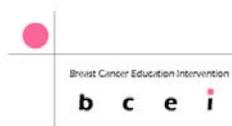




## MAINTAINING AND FOSTERING HOPE

Hope is always viewing the cup as half full. After breast cancer many women have a loss of hope. Once treatment is over, many women feel a return of hope, while others keep feeling hopeless. Here are some tips to help you get back hope after breast cancer treatment.

- **Be aware that it is normal to feel sad** or to wonder, “Why me?” Having hope does not mean sticking your head in the sand and pretending that you never had breast cancer. It is having an upbeat view of things to come despite your breast cancer.
- **Think about** the things in your life that give you hope. What do you look forward to? They can be simple things or big life events.
- **Join a support group or talk with others.** People acquire hope by talking with others who have been through the same thing survived. If you can't get out of the house there are some on-line support groups.
- **Read a book that inspires you.** Much like support groups, hearing how others came through a similar tough time can give hope.
- **Reflect on the meaning** of life and death. Decide what means most in your life. You've been through a lot, finding meaning in your experiences helps you to accept them and put them in the past. You may want to talk with your minister, priest or spiritual leader and discuss your faith's spiritual part of hope.
- **Share your story of survival** with family, friends and others who need hope. Talking about your story helps give you feelings of success in survival.
- **Enjoy nature...**go outside and sit in the sunshine, take a walk in a park, watch the birds or find some way to enjoy the beauty in nature.
- **Treat yourself** with a relaxing bubble bath, manicure or massage, listen to your favorite music or watch a sunset.
- **Take time for prayer and meditation,** which can help you focus on your true priorities.



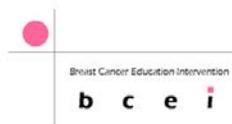
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## MAINTAINING AND FOSTERING HOPE

- **Create a joy collage** or memory book by cutting out pictures or poems in magazines that represent hope to you.
- **Learn more about breast cancer and its treatment.** New and improved cancer treatments are helping more people to survive this disease. Knowing the facts makes facing the future easier.
- **Remember your past accomplishments** and the inner qualities you possess that helped you get them. Think about how these qualities can help you to regain hope now as a breast cancer survivor.
- **Set realistic short term goals,** as you achieve them you will gain confidence
- **Laugh...**cancer isn't funny, but a lot of the things that have happened to you as a result of your cancer are. A good sense of humor can carry you a long way.
- **Journal:** Write down all of your feelings of hope and despair in a journal or diary and track them. Include the things that give you hope as well as the things that discourage you.
- **Rest:** regaining hope takes energy and is hard when you are tired or weary. Pass on chores to family and friends. Create a "Hope Box" or basket and place slips of paper in it with tasks others can do for you written on them. When others ask what they can do to help, let them look through the basket and choose something.
- **Find ways to feel needed,** valued and cared for in relationships.
- **Talk to your family and friends.** They have a lot of the same feelings and fears that you do. Encourage, but do not force, one another to talk. Listen carefully to each other's feelings. Provide comfort and support. Talk about your current situation; remember past illness and losses to help make sense of the situation.
- **Try deep breathing and relaxation exercises** several times a day.



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## MAINTAINING AND FOSTERING HOPE

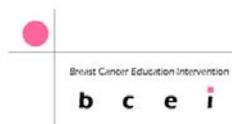
- **Volunteer** in a breast cancer support group, as a breast cancer supporter, or for another cause you feel strongly about. Having a sense of purpose gives you hope

### When Do You Need to Seek Help?

You need to be able to talk openly about your concerns. If you have continued problems in communicating, consider a referral to a professional counselor or support group that discusses these issues.

### Useful websites:

- <http://www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorshipduringandaftertreatment/storiesofhope/index>
- <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/hope>
- <https://www.cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/facing-forward>



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