Empowering Cancer Survivors and Their Caregivers to Create Their Best Lives

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Faculty Disclosure

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Rebecca Vinton has listed no relevant financial relationship that would be considered a conflict of interest.
ATTH Mission: To empower cancer survivors and their caregivers to create their best lives.

- Began in 2005
- Became a 501c3 Nonprofit in 2009
- 13 Board Members, 2 staff members
Why ATTH?

**Medical** cancer treatment focuses on physical elimination of cancer.

**Holistic** cancer recovery needs to include physical, emotional, psychological, & spiritual health.
The Rationale for Holistic Rehabilitation for Cancer Survivors:

- Patients with other medical traumas routinely receive rehabilitation services following acute medical treatment, e.g., cardiac patients, stroke patients.
- Patients are discharged from cancer treatment w/o rehab and scheduled for a 3-4 month follow-up visit.
- Research shows that this post time is a period of high anxiety for cancer patients.
How did ATTH come about?

ASK QUESTIONS, SEE WHAT’S ALREADY BEEN DONE, DESIGN A PILOT PROJECT, AND TEST IT

- Dr. Stephanie Koralesski, Dr. Kay Ryan--Co-Founders
- What do survivors say they want and need?
- Is there evidence based practice that is relevant?
- ADAPT THE RESEARCH TO FIT A COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAM
SURVIVOR ISSUES REPORTED IN NATIONAL RESEARCH:

- Long term physical side effects of treatment
- Fear and possibility of recurrence
- Emotional and psychological side effects
- Sexual side effects
- Pain

From Cancer Patient to Cancer Survivor: LOST IN TRANSITION
Committee on Cancer Survivorship: Improving Care and Quality of Life

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE AND NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES
THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES PRESS; Washington, D.C.  www.nap.edu  2005
SURVIVOR ISSUES REPORTED IN NATIONAL RESEARCH:

- Financial stress
- Career interruption
- Changed roles in family
- “Chemo-brain”
- Difficulty getting insurance
- Genetic repercussions in family
Getting Their Lives Back: Helping Survivors of Cancer to Move Forward
A TIME TO HEAL’S SURVIVORSHIP 101 CLASS...

➢ Is an evidence-based, multi-modal survivorship program that already exists across Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Northern California. Over 20 communities offering ATTH.

➢ Was conceived by a multidisciplinary group of professionals.

➢ Has been developed with funding by foundations, grants and donations.

➢ Conducts on-going research which shows statistically significant positive outcomes that are maintained after the program ends.

➢ Is overwhelmingly endorsed by patient participants.
SURVIVORSHIP 101

- 9-12 weeks
- 1 three-hour session per week
- Closed group
- Maximum of 15 survivors per group with two facilitators
Weekly Protocol:

- Social Time with Snacks
- Exercise
- Informative Presentation
- Break
- Discussion
- Journaling
- Relaxation Power Tools
- Affirmations
Holistic and Individualized Program

- Participants are encouraged to view this as a smorgasbord – try everything, then take what is best for them individually.
- The goal is to create your best life beginning with a self-directed first step.
- The launching point is a contract with yourself.
- We send a copy back at 3 months post graduation, then have a reunion at 6 months.
Holistic Design of Experiences

Journaling

Physical

Mental

Spiritual

Yoga Warrior

Relaxation Training

Scarf Dancing
Psychological Dimension

- Education about normal physical, emotional, and long-term side effects of cancer treatment.
- Teaching the concept and strategies of resilience.
- Processing difficult feelings – depression, anxiety, dread, anger, hopelessness.
- Teaching mind/body techniques to help people cope with fear, feelings, and discomfort.
- Education, coaching, and support to develop self-advocacy skills and attitudes.
Psychological & Emotional Dimensions:

- Relaxation training
- Meditation
- Guided Imagery
- Energy Pickups using acupressure tapping
- Affirmations to change negative cognitions into positive beliefs.
Physical Dimension

- Exercise to facilitate pain free movement, lymphatic drainage, cognitive recovery & build energy
- Education about diet, nutrition, use of herbs/supplements
- Education about exercise
- Education about cognitive side effects of treatment and stress.
Body Image

- Exercises and music are geared toward fun and enjoying being in your body again.

- Lectures deal with making friends with yourself and your body again after cancer.
Spiritual

- Exploration of the impact of cancer on spirituality.
- Information about ways to reconnect with spirit and a sense of awe and appreciation.
- Techniques, music, guided imagery to illustrate ways to enhance spirituality.
Social/Relational

- Education and experiences to enhance relationships with:
  - Self, Self Image, Sexuality
  - Significant other
  - Family
  - Friends
  - Work
  - God
Assessment Tools Used:

**Brief Symptom Inventory** – anxiety, depression, somatization


**FACIT-SP** – physical, social, emotional, functional, and spiritual well-being


**The HOPE Scale** – hope and resilience


**Post Traumatic Growth Inventory** – relating to others, new possibilities, personal strength, spiritual change, appreciation of life


**Life Satisfaction Scale** – happiness

Survivorship 101

- Run by at least 2 certified facilitators who attend the two day training program in full.*
- Have facilitators re-certified by experience and testing every two years to maintain skills.
- Use the copyrighted *A Time to Heal* trainers’ and participants’ and caregiver manuals.
- Adhere to the protocol.
- Honor the copyright of the materials; the materials in the *A Time to Heal* books are only used within the 12 week classes and may not be used in parts or duplicated for individuals or other groups.

*Training programs are held in Nebraska or can be brought to your site. Fees vary depending on the number of trainees.*
Sites provide:

- Meeting room
- Refreshments for participants
- Stipends for facilitators and/or speakers as negotiated at individual sites
- IRB approval (if the site elects to be part of the ongoing outcome research)
- Site facilitators sign a contract to honor the copyright of A Time to Heal and not to reproduce or use the materials outside of the ATTH classes
A Time to Heal provides:

- Consultation to certified facilitators as needed after their training.
- Updates about new developments affecting the topics presented in the A Time to Heal class.
- Regular optional retreats for facilitators to upgrade skills for working with cancer survivors.
- Analysis of research data for sites participating in the research; outcome statistics are shared at intervals.
- Consultation on grant writing or soliciting donations to underwrite ATTH programs.
Other ATTH Programs:

- Two Metastatic Cancer Support Groups at the ACS Hope Lodge in Omaha

- Cancer-related Brain Fog 8-week Class

- 6th Annual Art of Living Beyond Cancer Conference—For Survivors, Caregivers, and Medical Professionals
Faculty/Staff

ATTH Co-founders:

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