Article Series Talking About Cancer All

Finding Your Community

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All Talking About Cancer

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For people living with cancer, finding a community can be important.

Finding a support group can put you in contact with people on a similar journey. It can provide practical and emotional support as you navigate questions and challenges. And it may relieve feelings of loneliness or isolation that people living with cancer may experience.

Community can mean different things to different people. And your needs may change over time. If you’re ready to connect with other people living with cancer, here are some **Microsteps** you can consider taking to help you get started. As always, consult with your care team for the management practices that are best for you.

Asking yourself what you want in a cancer support community.

Consider which aspects of a community are most important to you. Do you seek emotional support? Practical advice? A sense of belonging? Here are some questions you can ask yourself:

- What are my main goals in joining a cancer support community?
- What type of communication do I prefer?
- How much interaction am I looking for?
- Do I want a community focused on my specific type of cancer or a more general group?
- Do I feel ready to share my own experiences, or would I prefer to listen to others for now?
- How do I hope to feel after interacting with my cancer community?

Exploring the world of online cancer support groups.

The internet offers many forums and support groups for people living with cancer. And many large organizations and foundations have groups. Social media platforms also provide spaces where you can connect with others who understand what you're going through.

Asking someone in your network how they found social support.

If you’re connected to other people living with cancer, they may have recommendations or be able to offer an introduction. If you feel overwhelmed or unsure about joining a community, knowing someone who is already a part of one may make it feel like less of a leap.

Volunteering for a cancer-related cause in your community.

Giving back can be deeply rewarding. Volunteering is a way to connect socially with others and be a part of something larger and meaningful. Volunteering can be a way to get active, learn new skills, and make friends, and can also bring a sense of meaning and purpose.

Sharing your story.

Some people value privacy. Others find fulfillment in telling their story in a public way. If you’re in the latter group, there are many opportunities to share your cancer journey, such as on social media, a support group, or in an online newsletter. Sharing your story may help you feel more in control, and can also be an effective way to meet new people.

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