

What is Journeying Together: a unique cancer support group?

I designed the Journeying Together group using three key elements, all of which I are deeply restorative: community, creativity and mindfulness. We benefit greatly being in the company of others that “get” the cancer journey. Likewise we benefit by expressing ourselves creatively and allowing our minds to unhook from our daily stresses. This group combines all three components.

The group includes two short rounds of creativity. Creativity is defined very broadly. You do not have to be “good at it” and there is no need for special materials. Crayons, pencils, paints, collage scraps are all fine options. We usually write in response to the prompt and then do art for the second round but you can do it any way you choose on any particular week. The purpose of the creative components is to express ourselves in alternative ways. Something might arise in your art or writing that you haven’t articulated before. And creativity is fun. Members will reflect on the themes of your offering and their own emotional reactions. We will not offer art or writing critiques.

Meditation has meant different things to me at different time. Sometimes it is deep mindless relaxation, Sometimes it is having a conversation with Spirit. I first embraced guided meditation at the onset of my own cancer journey and I found it very beneficial. I aim to create a relaxing, guided experience that allows the mediation we do in group to be whatever you would like or need it to be for you, on that particular day. My aim in guiding the meditation is to provide some structure to keep you focused on not having a focus.

Here is the basic structure of the group:

- Gathering
- Checking in/pulse taking (optional)
- Prompt of the day. Word, phrase, poem or quote
- Round 1 of creativity (in response to a prompt or your choice)
- Share/discussion of themes
- Round 2 (in response to discussion or your choice)
- Sharing of your creativity
- Closing comments
- Meditation

Your role:

I love the reciprocity of group. We all contribute and we all get back. By sharing time, and listening to each other with respect and compassion, we give so much to each other. Cancer sucks but it can also create quick and strong bonds. If you have or had cancer, I am instantly your sister.

Some weeks you may have less energy or need more support from the group. That's okay. Overall it will balance out. If you have low energy, you may be giving to the group in ways you don't recognize.

Other important stuff:

It is always okay to pass if you don't feel comfortable sharing. Know that you will be encouraged to share because we all benefit from hearing from each other and witnessing the musings and doodles of all group members. Fine to talk about your writing or art instead of sharing.

Some group members are in active treatment and may need to take calls from care providers, lie down or come and go as their energy allows.

Please try to have a camera and microphone. We understand if glitches arise. Since this is a support group, hearing and seeing each other helps with the connection. You can purchase an external camera (and mic) that plugs into a USB port.

This is a drop-in group so our membership will vary. The group is designed so that new people can join and there isn't a need to retell our stories. What is happening for each of us currently, is the focus.

Group members are always welcome to email me with suggestions, feedback or questions.

Contact me if you have questions or would like to figure out if this group might be a good fit for you.

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