

Massachusetts General Hospital BMT Survivorship Program

Personal Reflection

Many survivors struggle with questions of why they had cancer and why they survived when others have not. Some survivors may find themselves questioning long-held views or beliefs as they try to make sense of their experience and find new meaning in life. Although every person creates meaning from their experiences in their own way, other cancer survivors have said they have found answers to some of these difficult questions by:

- **Re-evaluating old patterns and priorities.** Some survivors look at their cancer experience as a “wake up call” and begin to ask questions like: are my current roles in my family or a friend fulfilling? Does my job make me happy or am I just doing what other people expect me to do? What are the most important things in my life now?
- **Reaching out for spiritual support.** For some, spirituality and faith are a source of comfort and guidance. Mass General Cancer Center has chaplains and spiritual services who can give support to people of all faiths, as well as those who don’t consider themselves religious at all.
- **Keeping a journal or blogging.** Writing down your thoughts and feelings starts a process of self-discovery and, for some, of spiritual development. Allowing yourself to think every day or every week about your feelings is a way to get to know yourself better and to understand what gives meaning in your life now. Because blogging is much more public than journaling, it may also connect you with and help inspire other people who are going through a similar situation.
- **Finding new ways to support emotional wellbeing.** Some survivors choose to begin new activities, such as yoga, meditation, drawing, and music therapy. These activities and therapies help support their spiritual and emotional health. They make them feel less fearful and anxious. Other people become more active on social media as a way to gather information and cope.

Mass General Resources

Oncology Chaplaincy, 617-726-2220

BMT Social Workers, 617-726-5765

If you have concerns on how to manage certain feelings like guilt, confusion, anger, depression, or anxiety, please talk to your treatment team in the Bone Marrow Transplant Survivorship Program. We can help connect you with the right resources to cope most effectively with many of the emotions patients experience after surviving a bone marrow transplant.



Massachusetts General Hospital Bone Marrow Transplant Survivorship Program
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