

Meeting Other Survivors

Meeting other survivors can help you find hope and meaning in your cancer experience. You can meet other survivors either at a support group or by chatting online through the many cancer survivorship websites that are out there on the Internet. The Internet can be a good option for those that do not feel comfortable in a group setting. But as with any website make sure that the website is reliable. Do not give out information about yourself until you are sure how that information will be used, steer clear of those that have negative attitudes, this will only cause more fear and doubt and make sure you talk with your healthcare team about any advice you may have been given. However you choose to meet other survivors is up to you, but talking to another survivor can provide you with a wealth of information and comfort in knowing that you share similar experiences with others.

Other survivors understand what you are going through and this can bring hope when you feel that others that have not been through your situation may not understand. Sometimes it is helpful to meet with others that have had the same type of cancer and are close to you in age.

WHAT CAN A CANCER SURVIVOR GAIN FROM MEETING OTHER SURVIVORS?

- Encouragement
- Inspiration
- Information about their cancer
- Someone that will understand your tears, doubts and fears
- How to deal with the aftereffects of treatment
- How to talk to others about your cancer

When meeting other survivors and talking about your experience, keep in mind that not everyone responds or reacts to situations the same, even if you share the same type of cancer and are close in age.

Talking to others that are not cancer survivors may not be easy for you. Some instances that you may question if you should reveal that you are a cancer survivor:

- When you start a new job
- Dating
- Any physical change that is noticeable
- When you meet a new friend or someone else that has been diagnosed with cancer

Some things that you may want to ask yourself before telling others that you are a survivor:

- Am I ready and how do I go about making the introduction?
- At point do I tell them I am a survivor?
- How will I feel if they feel sorry for me?
- Will they be afraid of me or shy away?

Which ever way you decide to disclose the information that you are survivor make sure that you are comfortable with your decision and timing to do so. If you find it difficult and it begins to cause anxiety and depression make sure to talk with your healthcare provider or a counselor.

Works Cited

Adapted from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
www.fhcrc.org