

You have Cancer. Now What?

“You have cancer.” Hearing these words can cause shock, fear, denial, grief—or a combination of all. This is the beginning of the roller coaster ride that is the cancer experience. What comes next?

Those recently diagnosed with cancer seek the help of professionals at **Wellness Place** in Palatine, to find a path through their many emotions; to evaluate treatment options; manage side effects; and to formulate questions for healthcare providers. Most often a combination of individual and family counseling, integrative therapies and peer support are essential for cancer survivors, their loved ones and caregivers to maintain quality of life throughout the cancer journey. Through generous donations and grants, Wellness Place services are able to be offered **at no charge** which is vital during a time when treatment related expenses can be overwhelming.

Understanding the urgent needs of the newly diagnosed population, Wellness Place clinical specialists became certified to present the ACS educational program, “I Can Cope,” within their core menu of services. The program outlines cancer-related medical terms, treatments, side effects and how to manage them, and provides tips for communicating with doctors and family.

When Cancer is in Your Family

A cancer diagnosis has a profound impact on the individual as well as each family member. Questions emerge such as: Why me? What now? Is there support for my spouse and children?

Tailored for couples, individual adults, teens and children, one-on-one **cancer-**



Wellness Place Palatine

related counseling helps survivors manage stress and find effective ways to communicate with family members and healthcare providers.

Parents living with cancer face a unique set of challenges. To address their needs, we added **Parenting through Cancer** consultations to our menu of services. These discussions include common concerns related to talking with children about cancer and balancing home, hospital and sibling issues.

For parents who have lost a child to cancer, we created a **Parent Bereavement Group**. Facilitated support, guidance, and counseling are critical when dealing with grief of this magnitude. Each has lost a child in the recent past and is at a different stage of grief, some only a few months while others a year along the way. They reach out to each other while searching inward—in attempts to make sense of their child’s death, heal their broken hearts and forge ahead on the long road before them.

The Parent Bereavement Group has made us realize how vital services of this kind are to families experiencing cancer and in response, have initiated a **Bereavement Support Group** specifically for adults dealing with the death of a loved one from cancer. For information about this group contact Kathy Scortino, Wellness Place grief specialist at 847.241.5977.



Art therapy is offered as a component of individual counseling,

with the hire of a board certified art therapist who is also a child and adolescent life specialist. Art therapy provides an opportunity to express thoughts, emotions, desires, and anxieties related to diagnosis and treatment.

We all know people affected by cancer. Do they know about Wellness Place?

“Unfortunately the message about our services doesn’t always get to those newly diagnosed in their time of greatest need. It isn’t unusual to hear “I wish I had known about Wellness Place when I was first diagnosed,” said Pam Reiss, Executive Director. “The best gift you could give to someone experiencing cancer might be a referral to call for information and support.”

Counseling and cancer information specialists, healthcare professionals, volunteers, and staff—work together at Wellness Place—providing vital support and information that often becomes a life-line for cancer survivors and their families.

Wellness Place, cancer education and support is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. For more information visit WellnessPlace.org or call 847.221.2400.