RESTART TO LIFE!

Psychological Support Group Program for Cancer Patients

REÎNCEPE-ȚI VIAȚA!
Programul Grupurilor de Sprijin Psihologic pentru Pacienții cu Cancer

Annually, about 80,000 new cancer cases are diagnosed in Romania, and nearly 30,000 deaths are caused by this disease. Almost in every case, cancer proved to be a major challenge, not only for the surviving woman, but also for her family and friends, emotional and social support proving to be as important as specialized oncology care.

When she finds herself sick, the woman is desperate, thinking she will die or her life will be a continuous tragedy if she survives.

Unfortunately, in Romania we are almost exclusively concerned with the survival of the patient. It is very important, but not enough.

Sometimes the change can be dramatic, the woman has to change fundamentally to live with this disease, and this transformation can be frustrating. But often, change can be embraced as an opportunity for personal, physical, spiritual and mental development.

That is why the Support Group for Women diagnosed with Cancer from the “Regina Maria” Social Polyclinic Foundation aims to assist women, especially at this stage, to cope more easily with the treatment period and to establish a new, healthy life in which the risk of relapse is minimal.

The group provides a secure frame where cancer diagnosed people can open their hearts and receive responses from people who truly understand. Although their families can be very loving, there are moments when they cannot fully understand them. Sharing experiences with other people in the support group helps them to adapt to the new conditions and to fight more effectively with the disease. It is of great help for patients recently diagnosed with cancer to be surrounded by people who are months or years before them, living fully after having the traumatic cancer experience.

Once this diagnosis has been received, it is understandable for patients to have mixed feelings, negative and profound emotions such as: What am I going to do? To whom can I trust? Should I follow this doctor’s recommendation, ask for a second medical opinion or try alternative treatment? Should I fight to the end or should I prepare to die?

Therefore, the objectives of the psychological support program are: reducing the survivors’ social isolation and anxiety, increasing the information level about the disease, increasing communication skills, reducing the state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion, and developing strategies for accepting and fighting the disease and for reducing stress.

The program is free of charge for patients without income or without medical insurance, with funding support from C&A Romania. For patients with incomes below 1600 RON, the cost of one meeting is between 20 and 40 RON, and for beneficiaries with incomes over 1,600 RON, the cost of a meeting is 80 RON.

Where have we left from?

We initiated this project just one year ago. At first there were just meetings with the psychologist and the specialists invited. Along the way, we realized that the fight against this disease was on several fronts. We tackled the disease from a medical, psychological, nutritional, sporting, spiritual, social, beauty, work and justice perspective.

Where have we arrived to?

What was initially just a support group, today is a Support Group Program, by which, by the end of March 2017, 96 patients benefited from assistance and support.
Benefits

- Imaging investigations, specialized consultations, diagnosis and treatment, specific tests at the "Regina Maria" Polyclinic Social Foundation, as well as in partner clinics - Phonix Clinic and Neolife Clinic.
- Kinetotherapy and lymphatic drainage massage sessions at Fiziolife Medica.
- Psychological group counselling and individual sessions, Smart Psi Association being the partner of the "Regina Maria" Foundation in providing psychologists specialized in psycho-oncology.
- Personalized exercise program "Yoga for Cancer" at Blue Aerobic.
- Personalized diet advice provided by dietician Iustin Rosu.
- Spiritual counselling, which seeks to complete the process of forgiveness as the foundation of healing.
- Beauty advice at the SunGate Salon.
- Social events, music, art, theatre and film at Sheida Cafe.
- Handmade creation workshops at the Santo Fito teahouse and legal counselling in the work relationship.

Where do we aim to arrive?

Starting from May 2017, the program will also be functional in Ploiești, as a result of the numerous expansion requests received last year since the launch of the pilot program in Bucharest.

Thus, with the help of a patient, a community of people has developed in Ploiești to become the beneficiaries of the first support groups.

There will be bi-monthly meetings over 4 months and, with the support of a team of psychologists, there will be organized discussions to share emotional experiences, information activities with an educational role, but also meetings with specialists in oncology, radiotherapy, kinetotherapy, physiotherapy, psychology and complementary therapies.

Should you have patients or acquaintances who would like to be part of the Support Groups, we kindly welcome them by phone: 0720.655.618 (psychologist Lidia Stoica, Program Coordinator) or e-mail: lidia.stoica@fundatiareginamaria.ro.