

# SUPPORT PROGRAMS

## for CANCER and for SICKLE CELL Disorders

Vol. 19 No. 4 Fall 2025 Newsletter/Calendar

*from Bob David, former manager:*

I will forever feel privileged and grateful to have known the strength, courage, wisdom, and hope shown over and over again by the people in this community. Countless fond memories and friendships remain in my heart.

As I am excited about my ‘new chapter’, I am equally excited for you—because you have two of the most caring and dedicated people on Earth carrying the support programs forward. Vipasha brings passion, energy, knowledge, and vision, with many years of solid experience as a licensed clinical social worker in oncology. Cyrena has a long track record of consistency, responsiveness, competence, and attention to detail. Both Vipasha and Cyrena will serve you well and wholeheartedly; both will always be there for you.

In this field, mutual trust, respect, and support are critical. I am so pleased that you have these two wonderful, amazing women to maintain, strengthen, and deepen the

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programs, with these values always at the fore!

In gratitude, with my best wishes for you all,

*Bob David*



*Pictured (from left to right): Beth Sommers, Vipasha Agnihotri Gupta, Neka Doko, Bob David, Jackie Kasinskas, Cyrena Gasse*

## Support Groups

Support groups meet monthly. They offer a unique opportunity for cancer survivors in active treatment and in follow-up to get to know others who have had similar disease and treatment experiences as their own. The intention is to maintain a safe space where participants may share details of their experience, ask questions, and offer knowledge and insights from their cancer journey. True support, encouragement, and uplifting energy are the norm.

Sometimes a doctor or specialist is invited to give information on treatments and self-care and to answer questions; but the heart of the group is always patients talking to patients. Generally what is gained in these groups can seldom be found elsewhere.

*All groups meet primarily by Microsoft Teams. If you are newly interested in participating, please let us know and we will provide you with the link info. We can also help you with using Teams if necessary.*

- Our support groups are open to all patients/survivors, regardless of when and where they may have been treated.
- Contact our office for more info and to be on the email and text lists for the Teams link(s) and meeting reminders.
- Family members and friends are welcome to the cancer support groups (though men only to the men's groups, women only to the women's groups). The Sickle Cell Disease support group is exclusively for adult patients.

### *One-to-One Peer Support*

If you would like to speak one-to-one with someone who has had a similar disease and/or treatment experience as you've had, let us know and we will try to connect you up.

### *Talk Time for Family Members*



If you are a family member of someone who has cancer, sickle cell disease, or any serious chronic illness, you may feel worried or stressed. If so, one of the most helpful things you can do for yourself (and for the patient) is to talk with others having a similar experience. The sessions we offer are for *family members only* (not for patients). See table on next page for days and times.

NAME	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
Cancer by Type			
BLOOD	2nd Wed.	1-3p	MICROSOFT TEAMS
BREAST	2nd Tues.	6-7:30p	
GASTROINTESTINAL (GI)	1st Fri.	12-2p	
HEAD & NECK	2nd Thurs.	6-8p	
LUNG	2nd Thurs.	1-3p	
PROSTATE	1st Tues.	5-7p	
Cancer by Population Group			
MEN (any cancer)	Last Mon.	12-2p	MICROSOFT TEAMS
WOMEN (any cancer)	Last Mon.	2:30-4p	
HAITIAN CREOLE-speaking	Returning in Jan. 2026		
SPANISH-speaking	Last Tues.	7-9p	
YOUNG ADULTS (ages 18-39) offered by Dana Farber	1st & 3rd Wed.	5:30-7p	Info at 617-632-6819 yap@dfci.harvard.edu
Sickle Cell & other diseases			
SICKLE CELL DISEASE	1st Thurs.	6-8p	MICROSOFT TEAMS
AMYLOIDOSIS (not shown on calendar)	1st Thurs.	1-3p	
Additional Support			
OSTOMY colostomy/ileostomy/urostomy Call Jocelyn at 781-228-9509	3rd Wed.	6:30-8p	Teleconference
FAMILY MEMBERS	1st Mon. 4th Thurs.	11a-12p	MICROSOFT TEAMS
BEREAVEMENT For those who have lost a parent to cancer or other serious illness. Meets by Microsoft Teams. Call 617-638-7540 for info.			

***\*Please check calendar on pgs. 4-5 for any schedule changes.\****

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Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

SG = Support Group      Most support groups and support activities are held via Microsoft Teams.  
Check individual listings for meeting mode and in-person locations. Call 617-414-5726 to confirm schedule.

		1 BEAM 11a-1p	2 Chair Yoga 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	3 GI Ca SG 12-2p
6	7 Prostate Ca SG 5-7p	8 Blood Ca SG 1-3p Intentional Wellness 6-7p	9 Chair Yoga 5-6p	10
13 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY (Clinics Open)	14 Cooking 2:30-3:30p Breast Ca SG 6-7:30p	15 Intentional Wellness 6-7p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p	16 Arts & Crafts 11a-1p Chair Yoga 5-6p	17 <b>Writing Circle</b> 11a-1p
20	21	22 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	23 Chair Yoga 5-6p	24
27 Men's Ca SG 12-2p Women's Ca SG 2:30-4p	28 Spanish Ca SG 7-9p	29 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	30 Chair Yoga 5-6p	31
3	4 Prostate Ca SG 5-7p	5 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	6 Chair Yoga 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	7 GI Ca SG 12-2p
10	11 VETERANS DAY (Clinics Open) Cooking 2:30-3:30p Breast Ca SG 6-7:30p	12 Blood Ca SG 1-3p Intentional Wellness 6-7p	13 Lung Ca SG 1-3p Chair Yoga 5-6p Head/Neck Ca SG 6-8p	14 <b>Museum of Fine Arts</b> <i>Virtual Tour</i> 2-4p
17	18	19 Intentional Wellness 6-7p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p	20 Arts & Crafts 11a-1p Chair Yoga 5-6p Fam Talk Time 11a-12p	21
24 Men's Ca SG 12-2p Women's Ca SG 2:30-4p Chair Yoga 5-6p	25 Spanish Ca SG 7-9p	26 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	27 THANKSGIVING DAY (Clinics Closed)	28
1 Intentional Wellness 6-7p Fam Talk Time 11a-12p	2 Prostate Ca SG 5-7p	3 <b>Jewelry-Making Wksp</b> 6-8:30p	4 Chair Yoga 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	5 GI Ca SG 12-2p
8 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	9 Cooking 2:30-3:30p	10 <b>HOLIDAY PARTY</b> 7-9p	11 Lung Ca SG 1-3p Chair Yoga 5-6p Head/Neck Ca SG 6-8p	12
15	16	17 Intentional Wellness 6-7p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p	18 Arts & Crafts 11a-1p Chair Yoga 5-6p Fam Talk Time 11a-12p	19
22  29	23 Intentional Wellness 6-7p  30	24  31	25  CHRISTMAS DAY (Clinics Closed)	26

## Support Activities

Our ongoing activity groups speak to the interests of many. People get to know one another in the context of skill-building and body/mind activities. Family members and friends are welcome to participate.

*Most groups meet by Microsoft Teams. If you are newly interested in participating, please let us know and we will provide you with the link info.*

Contact our office for more info and to be on the email and text lists for Teams links and reminders.



NAME	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
Body and Mind			
INTENTIONAL WELLNESS — BREATH, SOUND & MOTION Physical healing and emotional balance through simple qigong & yoga exercises	1st & 3rd Mon.	6-7p	MICROSOFT TEAMS
CHAIR YOGA Seated exercises for body, breath, mind	Thursdays	5-6p	MICROSOFT TEAMS
Handiwork			
ARTS & CRAFTS Fun, simple projects. All materials provided.	3rd Thursday	11a-1p	Moakley 3rd floor
Diet and Nutrition			
COOKING CLASSES for cancer & sickle cell patients  Go to <a href="http://www.bmc.org/cookingclasses">www.bmc.org/cookingclasses</a> for information on other BMC Teaching Kitchen programs and classes.	2nd Tues.	2:30-3:30p	MICROSOFT TEAMS



## Activity Descriptions

### INTENTIONAL WELLNESS

— *BREATH, SOUND & MOTION*

~ Lynne Bolen

Easy, meditative Qigong and Dao Yoga movements and techniques that incorporate breathwork, vocalizations, and visualizations to support overall health, healing, and longevity. They reduce stress and anxiety, enhance blood circulation, increase energy, and improve overall emotional balance.

### CHAIR YOGA

~ Colleen Brescia

Yoga exercises while seated to increase strength, flexibility, and mobility and to improve breathing and increase mindfulness.

### ARTS & CRAFTS

~ Cyrena Gasse

Each month, participants learn new, simple craft projects. No experience necessary. All materials provided. Come share some laughs, get busy, and add your own creative touches!

### COOKING

~ BMC Registered Dietitians

From BMC's Teaching Kitchen, registered dietitians demonstrate how to make tasty, easy, healthful dishes. We email the recipe(s) in advance, so you can get the ingredients and cook along! Or simply watch and enjoy.



## Complementary Services

### ACUPUNCTURE CLINIC

Acupuncture is a 2,500-yr-old method to treat pain and many other symptoms. With 40+ years experience, Beth Sommers, PhD, MPH, LAc, offers sessions to BMC adult sickle cell patients and to BMC cancer patients currently or recently in treatment. Thursdays, 9am-12pm, Moakley Bldg, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. To request a free appointment, call or email the Program Manager (see back page).

### American Cancer Society



The American Cancer Society offers free resources to cancer

patients. For information on what is currently available, call the ACS hotline, 800-227-2345 (open 24/7) or go to [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). You may also consult with your Patient Navigator.

## Feature Programs

### MUSEUM of FINE ARTS TOURS

Friday, November 14, 2-4p, by Zoom

**Virtual** tour of selected artwork, led by volunteer guides.



Contact us for **FREE PASSES** to the MFA.

### JEWELRY-MAKING WORKSHOP

Wednesday, Dec. 3, 6-8:30p, FGH Bldg

Our popular workshop is back, just in time for the holidays. BMC provides the beads, equipment, and help to make fabulous necklaces, bracelets, and earrings.

**Reservations required!**



### HOLIDAY PARTY

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 7-9p, Shapiro Lobby

Feast and festivities for cancer survivors and sickle cell patients (plus limited guests) who have been or would like to be participants in any of our support programs or activities. **Reservations required!**



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[www.bmc.org/cancer-center/support](http://www.bmc.org/cancer-center/support)