

# SUPPORT PROGRAMS

for **CANCER** and for **SICKLE CELL**  
Disorders

Vol. 18 No. 4 Fall 2024 Newsletter/Calendar

**D**ear friends...

The upcoming Holiday Party on December 11th will mark 20 years since BMC started gathering cancer patients together to honor their experience. In 2020, we invited sickle cell patients—or “warriors,” as they are called for their incredible endurance in bearing through pain crises—to join our programs. The support BMC offers through its programs is largely psychosocial. Yet there is an equal emphasis on what makes our hands, bodies, hearts, and minds smile and simply *feel* good. These diseases are serious business, of course. But they are not *who* you are. They are something you must accept and deal with. In our support programs, we care about the **YOU** who has to do this accepting and dealing. We look at *you*, the *whole person*.

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**I**n this light, we want our programs to stay relevant and innovative. I’m so pleased that we will soon be offering support to patients raising children—starting with sickle cell warriors—and that we are collaborating with Women’s Money Matters to empower patients around finances and their goals. (See back page.)

**I**smiled inwardly during our IGames on the Green event in August as I watched adults, seniors, and children *as young as 4 years old* play old-timey, no-tech games together and *compete* in a friendly way. It felt we were doing something right!

Wishing you a warm fall season and happy holidays to come...

*Bob David*, Manager

## Support Groups

Support groups meet monthly. They offer a unique opportunity for current patients and short- and long-term survivors alike 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 that doctors usually cannot provide. 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.

### *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.



### ***North Shore LGBTQIA+ Cancer Support Group***

For wherever you are in your journey...  
Sponsored by the  
North Shore LGBTQ+  
Network.



[www.northshorelgbtqnetwork.org](http://www.northshorelgbtqnetwork.org)

*All groups meet primarily by ZOOM. 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 ZOOM 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 Zoom 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.

### ***Caregiver Support Group***



The role of caregiver to a cancer or sickle cell patient can be very challenging and stressful. You may feel no one understands or appreciates the weight you are carrying. One of the best things you can do for yourself is to talk with others who are experiencing the same thing. Only caregivers are allowed to participate in this group.

NAME	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
<b>Cancer by Type</b>			
BLOOD <sup>†</sup>	2nd Wed.	1-3p	ZOOM
BREAST*	2nd Tues.	6-7:30p	
GASTROINTESTINAL (GI) <sup>†</sup>	1st Fri.	12-2p	
HEAD & NECK <sup>†</sup>	2nd Thurs.	6-8p	
LUNG <sup>†</sup>	2nd Thurs.	1-3p	
PROSTATE <sup>†</sup>	1st Tues.	5-7p	
<b>Cancer by Population Group</b>			
MEN <sup>†</sup> (any cancer)	Last Mon.	12-2p	ZOOM
WOMEN** (any cancer)	Last Mon.	2:30-4p	
HAITIAN CREOLE-speaking <sup>†</sup>	4th Thurs.	5-7p	
SPANISH-speaking <sup>†</sup>	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
<b>Sickle Cell &amp; other diseases</b>			
SICKLE CELL DISEASE <sup>††</sup>	1st Thurs.	6-8p	ZOOM
SARCOIDOSIS <i>(not shown on calendar)</i> Call Melissa at 617-834-4123 or Sharon at 857-492-7616.	3rd Thurs.	6:30-8p	
AMYLOIDOSIS <sup>†</sup> <i>(not shown on calendar)</i>	1st Thurs.	1-3p	
<b>Additional Support</b>			
OSTOMY colostomy/ileostomy/urostomy Call Jocelyn at 781-228-9509	3rd Wed.	6:30-8p	Teleconference
CAREGIVERS* <sup>†</sup>	4th Thurs.	10-11:30a	ZOOM
BEREAVEMENT <sup>†</sup> For those who have lost a loved one to cancer, sickle cell disease, or other serious illness. Meets by ZOOM video conference. Call 617-638-7540 for info.			

Facilitators: \*Vipasha AgnihotriGupta, LCSW  
\*\*Julie Catalano, LICSW

<sup>†</sup>Bob David  
<sup>††</sup>Isoken Osaze, LCSW

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

SG = Support Group CSG = Cancer Support Group

Most support groups and support activities are held by ZOOM.

Locations of feature programs are noted on back page. Call 617-414-5726 to confirm schedule.

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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
SG = Support Group CSG = Cancer Support Group Most support groups and support activities are held by ZOOM. Locations of feature programs are noted on back page. Call 617-414-5726 to confirm schedule.				
	1 <i>No Prostate CSG</i>	2 <i>No BEAM</i>	3 Chair Yoga 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	4 <i>GI CSG &gt; Oct. 11</i>
7 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	8 Cooking 2:30-3:30p Breast CSG 6-7:30p	9 Blood CSG 1-3p BEAM 6-7:30p	10 Lung CSG 1-3p Chair Yoga 5-6p Head/Neck CSG 6-8p	11 GI CSG 12-2p
14 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY (Clinics Open) Observer Mind 5-6:30p	15 Arts & Crafts 6-8p	16 BEAM 4-5:30p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p Women's Money Matters (WMM) 6:30-8p	17 Chair Yoga 5-6p	18
21 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	22 <b>Writing Wksp</b> 11a-1p Arts & Crafts 6-8p	23 BEAM 4-5:30p WMM 6:30-8p	24 Caregiver SG 10-11:30a Chair Yoga 5-6p Haitian CSG 5-7p	25
28 Men's CSG 12-2p Women's CSG 2:30-4p Observer Mind 5-6:30p	29 <b>Writing Wksp</b> 11a-1p Spanish CSG 7-9p	30 BEAM 4-5:30p WMM 6:30-8p	31 Chair Yoga 5-6p	1 GI CSG 12-2p
4 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	5 Prostate CSG 5-7p	6 BEAM 4-5:30p WMM 6:30-8p	7 Chair Yoga 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	8 <b>Museum of Fine Arts Virtual Tour</b> 2-4p
11 VETERANS DAY (Clinics Open) Observer Mind 5-6:30p	12 <i>Cooking &gt; Nov. 19</i> Breast CSG 6-7:30p	13 Blood CSG 1-3p BEAM 4-5:30p WMM 6:30-8p	14 Lung CSG 1-3p Chair Yoga 5-6p Head/Neck CSG 6-8p	15
18 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	19 Cooking 2:30-3:30p Arts & Crafts 6-8p	20 BEAM 4-5:30p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p WMM 6:30-8p	21 Caregiver SG 10-11:30a Chair Yoga 5-6p Haitian CSG 5-7p	22
25 Men's CSG 12-2p Women's CSG 2:30-4p Observer Mind 5-6:30p	26 Spanish CSG 7-9p	27 BEAM 4-5:30p	28 THANKSGIVING DAY (Clinics Closed)	29
2 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	3 <b>Jewelry-Making Wksp</b> 6:30-9p	4 BEAM 4-5:30p WMM 6:30-8p	5 Chair Yoga 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	6 GI CSG 12-2p
9 Observer Mind 5-6:30p	10 Cooking 2:30-3:30p	11 HOLIDAY PARTY 7-9p	12 Chair Yoga 5-6p	13
16 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	17 Arts & Crafts 6-8p	18 BEAM 4-5:30p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p WMM 6:30-8p	19 Caregiver SG 10-11:30a Chair Yoga 5-6p	20
23 30	24 31	25 CHRISTMAS DAY (Clinics Closed)	26	27

## 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 ZOOM. 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 Zoom links and reminders.



NAME	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
<b>Mind and Body</b>			
OBSERVER MIND Learning & practicing how to be mindful	2nd & last Mon.	5-6:30p	ZOOM
INTENTIONAL WELLNESS — <i>BREATH, SOUND &amp; MOTION</i> Physical healing and emotional balance through simple qigong & yoga exercises	1st & 3rd Mon.	6-7p	ZOOM
BEAM <i>BODY•ENERGY•AWARENESS•MOVEMENT</i> Loosening up, tension-release, balance, body awareness, unifying of energy	Wednesdays	<b>New Time</b> <i>beg. 10/16</i> 4-5:30p	
CHAIR YOGA Seated exercises for body, breath, mind	Thursdays	5-6p	
<b>Handiwork</b>			
ARTS & CRAFTS Fun, simple projects. All materials provided.	3rd Tues.	6-8p	Moakley Lower Level (basement)
<b>Diet and Nutrition</b>			
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	ZOOM



## Activity Descriptions

### OBSERVER MIND

~ Bob David

Short meditations, reflection, and discussion to help us observe our thoughts and feelings. Through this practice, we aim to increase our awareness, become less controlled by our thoughts and feelings, and become more able to see things clearly.

### 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.

### BEAM (*BODY • ENERGY •*

*AWARENESS • MOVEMENT*)

~ Bob David

A blend of exercise, Tai Chi, dance, and meditation, helpful for most all conditions. Set to a variety of selected music, the activities are designed to:

- *loosen, stretch, and strengthen*
- *improve coordination and balance*
- *release body tension & unify energy throughout the body*

The overall goal is greater awareness, comfort, and facility with our bodies.

### 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 in advance, so you can get the ingredients and cook along! Or simply watch and enjoy. You'll find many helpful tips and techniques.

## 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 Bob (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

### WOMEN'S MONEY MATTERS

Wednesdays, 6:30-8pm, beg. Oct. 16th, "The Firehouse" at 434 Warren St, Dorch.

A program of 12 weekly group sessions along with 1-1 coaching to empower women around financial management and personal goals. Run by the experienced Boston-based organization, Women's Money Matters. *Inquire right away if interested, as space is limited.*

**Advance registration required!** May be offered again in the near future.

### WRITING WORKSHOPS

Tuesdays, Oct. 22 & 29, 11a-1p by Zoom

Creative writing exercises for writers at all levels. Beginners are absolutely welcome. Have fun and uncover your own skill!

### SCD PARENTING SUPPORT

Dates/time/location to be determined

For sickle cell patients who are parents of one or more children aged 18 years or younger. A series of sessions providing a safe space to share experiences, challenges, and strategies for caring for your child(ren) while managing your disease.

## MUSEUM of FINE ARTS

1. A Tuesday morning to be determined (*Meet inside Museum Rd. entrance.*)

In-person group tour of the Salvador Dali exhibit.

2. Friday, Nov. 8, 2-4p, by Zoom

Informative virtual tour of selected artwork, led by volunteer guides.

**\*\*Contact us anytime for instructions to obtain FREE PASSES to the Museum.**

### JEWELRY-MAKING WORKSHOP

Tuesday, Dec. 3, 6:30-9p, FGH Bldg

A very popular workshop over the years, in time for the holidays. BMC provides the beads, equipment, and help to make fabulous necklaces, bracelets, and earrings.

**Reservations required!**



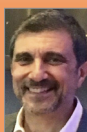
### HOLIDAY PARTY

Wednesday, Dec. 11, 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)