

CANCER & SICKLE CELL SUPPORT PROGRAMS



THE PATKIN
SICKLE CELL
CENTER



Vol. 18 No. 1 Winter 2024 Newsletter/Calendar

From the manager...

We enter our 20th year of providing an array of support groups, activities, feature programs, and special events to patients from Boston Medical Center and beyond. If you have ever experienced cancer or are living with sickle cell disease, you will always be welcome to join our very supportive community. Please find our contact info on the last page.

I met Colleen Brescia in early November at a Leukemia & Lymphoma Society half-day patient program. I was there to do a presentation on support groups. Lynne Bolen was also offering a short session of her Intentional Wellness class, and Colleen a sample chair yoga session. As I stretched and breathed to the exercises that Colleen led, I thought, *hmm, she would be a great one to replace our wonderful Betsy!* (For many years, Betsy Simmons taught yoga and then a weekly Movement & Meditation



*Colleen Brescia
- Chair Yoga
instructor*

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class for us. With a new grandbaby and other opportunities before her, she decided it was time to give up these classes.)

Colleen accepted my invitation, and starting Thursday, January 11th, she will be leading a weekly Chair Yoga class by Zoom (see pages 6-7). She says, “I have been practicing yoga for over 15 years. After completing my 200-hour yoga teacher training, I am honored now to be teaching. Yoga is a lifelong practice with amazing benefits, including increased strength, flexibility, and mobility, as well as improved breathing and mindfulness.”

I hope you will join me in welcoming Colleen and participating in her class!

All the best wishes to you,

Bob David

Support Groups

Support groups 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 find someone who will be happy to speak with you.



North Shore LGBTQIA+ Cancer Support Group

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



www.northshorelgbtqnetwork.org

All groups are mostly meeting 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.

Groups meet **monthly** unless otherwise noted.

NAME	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
Cancer by Type			
BLOOD	2nd Wed.	1-3p	ZOOM
BREAST	2nd Tues.	5-7p	
GASTROINTESTINAL (GI)	1st Fri.	12-2p	
LUNG	2nd Thurs.	1-3p	
PROSTATE	1st Tues.	5-7p	
HEAD & NECK	2nd Thurs.	6-8p	
Cancer by Population Group			
WOMEN (any cancer)	3rd Wed.	3-4:30p	ZOOM
MEN (any cancer)	Last Mon.	12-2p	
HAITIAN CREOLE-speaking	4th Thurs.	5-7p	
SPANISH-speaking	Last Tues.	7-9p	
YOUNG ADULTS (ages 18-39)	1st & 3rd Wed.	5:30-7p	For info, email yap@dfci.harvard.edu
Sickle Cell & other diseases			
SICKLE CELL DISEASE	1st Thurs.	6-8p	ZOOM
SARCOIDOSIS <i>(Not shown on calendar. For info, call Melissa at 617-834-4123 or Sharon at 857-492-7616.)</i>	3rd Thurs.	6:30-8p	
AMYLOIDOSIS <i>(Not shown on calendar)</i>	1st Thurs.	1-3p	
Additional Support			
OSTOMY colostomy/ileostomy/urostomy For info or help, contact Jocelyn at 781-228-9509	3rd Wed.	6:30-8p	Teleconference
CAREGIVERS	4th Thurs.	10-11:30a	ZOOM
BEREAVEMENT For those who have lost a loved one to cancer, sickle cell disease, or other serious illness. Meeting by ZOOM video conference. Call 617-638-7540 for info.			

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday



SG = Support Group CSG = Cancer Support Group

Most regularly occurring support groups and activities are being held by ZOOM.
For locations for feature programs, check back page. Call 617-638-7540 to confirm schedule.

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1 New Year's Day (clinics closed)	2 Prostate CSG 5-7p	3 BEAM 6-7:30p	4 Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	5 GI CSG 12-2p Intentional Wellness 6-7p
8 Observer Mind 5-6:30p	9 Cooking 2:30-3:30p Breast CSG 5-7p	10 Blood CSG 1-3p BEAM 6-7:30p	11 Lung CSG 1-3p Chair Yoga 5-6p Head/Neck CSG 6-8p	12
15 MLK Jr. Day (clinics closed)	16 Arts & Crafts 6-8p	17 no Women's CSG no BEAM Ostomy SG 6:30-8p	18 Chair Yoga 5-6p	19 Intentional Wellness 6-7p
22	23 Writing Wksp 11a-1p	24 BEAM 6-7:30p	25 Caregiver SG 10-11:30a Chair Yoga 5-6p Haitian CSG 5-7p	26
29 Men's CSG 2-4p Observer Mind 5-6:30p	30 Writing Wksp 11a-1p Spanish CSG 7-9p	31 BEAM 6-7:30p	1 Chair Yoga 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	2 GI CSG 12-2p
5 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	6 Prostate CSG 5-7p	7 BEAM 6-7:30p	8 Inner Healer 11a-12:30p Lung CSG 1-3p Chair Yoga 5-6p Head/Neck CSG 6-8p	9 Museum of Fine Arts Virtual Tour 2-4p
12 Observer Mind 5-6:30p	13 Cooking 2:30-3:30p Breast CSG 5-7p	14 Blood CSG 1-3p BEAM 6-7:30p	15 Inner Healer 11a-12:30p Chair Yoga 5-6p	16
19 Presidents' Day (clinics closed)	20 Arts & Crafts 6-8p	21 Women's CSG 3-4:30p BEAM 6-7:30p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p	22 Caregiver SG 10-11:30a Chair Yoga 5-6p Haitian CSG 5-7p	23 Intentional Wellness 6-7p
26 Men's CSG 12-2p Observer Mind 5-6:30p	27 Spanish CSG 7-9p	28 BEAM 6-7:30p	29 Chair Yoga 5-6p	1 GI CSG 12-2p Comedy Hour 7-8p
4 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	5 Prostate CSG 5-7p	6 BEAM 6-7:30p	7 Chair Yoga 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	8
11 Observer Mind 5-6:30p	12 Cooking 2:30-3:30p Breast CSG 5-7p	13 Blood CSG 1-3p BEAM 6-7:30p	14 Lung CSG 1-3p Chair Yoga 5-6p Head/Neck CSG 6-8p	15
18 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	19 Arts & Crafts 6-8p	20 Women's CSG 3-4:30p BEAM 6-7:30p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p	21 Chair Yoga 5-6p Art in the Moment! 6-8p	22
25 Men's CSG 12-2p Observer Mind 5-6:30p	26 Spanish CSG 7-9p	27 BEAM 6-7:30p	28 Caregiver SG 10-11:30a Chair Yoga 5-6p Haitian CSG 5-7p	29

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 are meeting 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
Mind and Body			
OBSERVER MIND Learning & practicing how to be mindful	2nd & last Mon.	5-6:30p	ZOOM
INTENTIONAL WELLNESS — BREATH, SOUND & MOTION Physical healing and emotional balance through simple qigong & yoga exercises	1st & 3rd Mon.	6-7p	ZOOM
BEAM BODY • ENERGY • AWARENESS • MOVEMENT Loosening up, tension-release, balance, body awareness, unifying of energy	Wednesdays	6-7:30p	
New! CHAIR YOGA Seated exercises for body, breath, mind	Thursdays	5-6p	
Handiwork			
ARTS & CRAFTS Fun, simple projects. All materials provided.	3rd Tues.	6-8p	Moakley LL
Diet and Nutrition			
COOKING CLASSES for cancer & sickle cell patients Go to www.bmc.org/cookingclasses 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 & volunteers

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. You will be sent the recipe, so you can get the ingredients in advance 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, 3rd 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. You may also consult with your Patient Navigator.

Feature Programs

WRITING WORKSHOPS

Tuesdays, Jan. 23 & 30, 11a-1p by Zoom

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

FINDING the INNER HEALER

Thursdays, Feb. 8 & 15, 11a-12:30p
by Zoom

Tonia Pinheiro leads an educational and creative expression organization called Wake Up! Works (www.wakeupworks.org). Many of us know her from her magical work over the years with True Story Theater and also from last year's 'Finding the Inner Healer' series.



In this program, Tonia offers concepts, guided imagery, prayer affirmations, and various practices for accessing the inner healer in all of us. As Tonia describes, the work is based on the notion that “the Soul—the personalized, invisible holder of the inner Light and Love of God—lives within us and is who *we* really are.”

Tonia brings joy and great energy to all her work. Please join us for these sessions and a meaningful journey of discovery!

MUSEUM of FINE ARTS TOUR

Friday, Feb. 9, 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.

COMEDY HOUR

Friday, Mar. 1, 7-8p, by Zoom

Laughter is always good medicine! Join in an hour of good-natured jokes and funny stories. Bring your own to share!

ART IN THE MOMENT!

Thursday, Mar. 21, 6-8p by Zoom

A session of creative, conceptual art-making. Simple instructions outline each project, then you make it unique! We share the results with one another and are usually surprised, delighted, and often inspired by the variety of ways people interpret and express their ideas. Simple materials required. Just bring an open mind and a readiness to be creative!



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