

Guidelines for Participation in Bay Area Cancer Connections (BACC) Support Groups

Purpose of the groups: Bay Area Cancer Connections' Support Groups provide a private place for people to discuss their experiences, share ideas, and provide support to one another. BACC groups and activities are voluntary associations of social support and participants from all geographic areas are welcome. They are not professional therapy groups and they may not meet all of your emotional support needs. BACC groups should not be your primary source of education regarding your diagnosis or treatment.

- If you need additional support or information, you are welcome to:
 - Speak with the group facilitator to obtain additional resource information.
 - Meet with one of our Volunteer Therapists for one or two free therapy sessions.
 - Email, call, or meet with Erika Bell (our Manager of Cancer Information and Education).
 - Call our Helpline (our Helpline hours are: Monday-Thursday 9:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m., Friday 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., and the 1st and 4th Saturdays of the month from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.).
 - We also encourage you to speak with your doctor if you have any questions about your treatment. ***In case of emergency, call 911 or go to your local Emergency Room.***

- We ask that all participants respect the confidentiality of others in the group. Free and open discussion is enhanced when all members agree not to share personal information with people outside the group.

- Confidentiality is strongly encouraged by all group members, but cannot be guaranteed. Facilitators are obligated to take any necessary steps if they believe a group member is a danger to themselves or others, or if information regarding child abuse, dependent adult abuse, or elder abuse is revealed during the group.

- If a participant has concerns about something that was said in the group, we ask that these concerns are brought up during the group.

- Participants are encouraged to share their own stories, perspectives, and experiences. All points of view are welcome! However, some limits should be observed:
 - Participants should not ever give medical advice, nor attempt to diagnose or recommend treatment options to others in any of BACC's programs.
 - Participants should not make any statement which is a conclusion about the medical condition of another person.
 - We encourage participants to discuss any information or concerns that arise during participation in the group with their personal physicians.
 - Participants should also keep in mind, and make clear in their communication during the group, that everyone's situation is unique and what may be right or comfortable for one person, may not be for another.
 - Participants listen carefully and respect others' points of view (e.g. participants do not interrupt,

name-call, etc.). Participants and facilitators aim to respect “equity of voice.”

- Please silence cell phones and other electronics and refrain from their use during the group if possible.
- Participants are encouraged to maintain communication and social ties with one another outside of the group. However, any email communication or listservs developed by the participants are intended for community building only, and the information shared is not representative of BACC’s point of view.
- If a participant is removed from the group the facilitator or a representative of BACC will be in touch with them as soon as possible. Ideally, before they are removed from the group.
- If a participant is interested in gathering medical information or sharing information with others, this information needs to first be given to Erika Bell, BACC’s Manager of Cancer Information and Education. Erika will then disseminate any vetted medical information in group through the use of the library’s online research folders, which can be accessed on BACC’s Virtual Resource Center (<https://www.bayareacancer.org/virtual-resource-center.html>) by clicking the “Breast Cancer Research” or “Ovarian Cancer Research” buttons. If clients need assistance accessing or understanding the information, they are encouraged to call the Helpline and make a Medical Information Services request.

If a participant has questions about these guidelines they should reach out to Jennette Gonzalez, Director of Programs and Services, at jennette@bayareacancer.org or 650-326-6299, ext. 16.