



*"Dare to reach your hand out into the darkness,
to pull another hand into the light."*

Norman Rice

OUR MISSION

The mission of The David Benzer Strike Out Fear Foundation is to "Build a Bridge from Fear to Hope" for people diagnosed with cancer.

By creating comforting, life-affirming environments in cancer clinic waiting rooms across the country, the Foundation's *Immediate Impact* program supports the emotional and spiritual needs of patients — to reduce fear and sustain the spirit from the moment of diagnosis, during treatment, and into survivorship.

Since 2011, the Foundation has provided amenities for cancer clinic waiting rooms and treatment facilities that have enhanced the therapeutic experience for close to 60,000 new cancer patients and 415,000 patient visits.



LIFE-AFFIRMING SUPPORT

Cancer is the most feared disease in modern society. When a person hears the words "You have cancer," in one moment their whole world changes. They go from living life — to being afraid . . . of the treatment, potential pain, and their own mortality. Daunted by the avalanche of medical information and the amount of energy required to physically, emotionally, and spiritually fight the disease — not to mention the financial burden it imposes — the fear can be overwhelming.

Once labeled a "cancer patient" family and friends — in response to their own fears — begin to treat the person differently. They may feel powerless to help, so they do nothing. Or, they talk in the third person, as if the person is not in the room. "How is he today?" "Did he have a good night?" Or, worse yet, they seek reassurance from the person, asking that he or she tell them that everything is fine. All of these behaviors serve to multiply the fear and isolate the person from feeling connected when they need it most.

"I'm not a Cancer Patient; I'm a Person Fighting Cancer"

One of the most challenging aspects of cancer is that family and friends often don't know how best to support their loved one. Part of our mission is to coach family and friends to:

- Provide comfort by relating to the person, not the cancer patient
- Embrace the need to care for the whole person battling for their life
- Not repeatedly ask "How are you?" seeking reassurance for their own fears
- Truly support their loved one by not mourning early
- Continue to enjoy the good things in life



*"What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us.
What we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal."*

Henry David Thoreau

SPONSOR A CANCER CLINIC MAKEOVER

A cancer clinic makeover can be accomplished for as little as \$5,000 — that's a small investment given its extraordinarily power to transform the waiting room experience for literally thousands of cancer patients.*

RESOURCES THAT PROVIDE COMFORT AND INSPIRE HOPE

The Foundation offers web-based and printed resources that:

- Help cancer patients manage anxiety and nurture hope
- Coach family and friends on how best to provide comfort and support
- Empower people with information on current treatment guidelines, complementary medicine, and supportive care

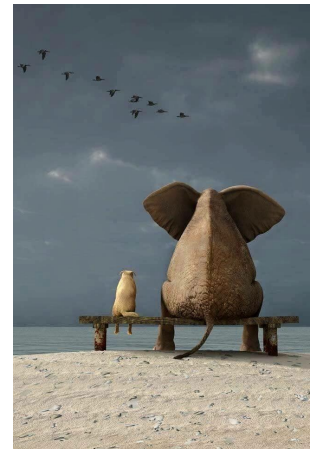
*Dependent on size of clinic.

HOW TO SUPPORT A PERSON WITH CANCER

Whatever coping skills a person has developed thus far in life, chances are, after getting a cancer diagnosis, they will need some new tools to deal with this special kind of challenge. As Elena Miller, MD (and cancer patient) so eloquently states in her guide, *Holy Shit, You've Got Cancer*, "it messes with your mind by destroying your faith in fairness and safety in the world; it messes with your body by making you feel so sick that many days feel like cruel torture rather than life. As bad as you think it is, it is worse. As much as it can be difficult to be around someone with cancer, it is not remotely close to how difficult it is having it." Below is a summary of her advice on how to support a person with cancer.

It's Not About You

On top of everything else, cancer seems to create a cruel irony where the person suffering with it no longer can spend as much time focusing on others' needs, and, simultaneously, others feel compelled to project their own needs and problems onto that person. To be of service to someone with cancer, you must have (or develop really fast) the self-awareness not to make their illness about you, in any way.



Be Honest and Authentic

Avoid clichés. When you don't know what to say, listen. Cancer does not suddenly require you to solve someone else's problems with your words. I never expect anyone to say the "perfect" words to me — I usually just want people to listen. And if we're friends, it's for a reason. Just be yourself. Your words need not be sophisticated to be authentic "That sucks, I'm sorry." "I'm thinking of you." "I hope things get better for you." "I love you." If you could imagine your words printed inside an inspirational book of quotes... don't say them."

Offer Advice Carefully, If At All

A person undergoing treatment is bombarded with information from many directions. Unless you have been through it yourself, it's best not to offer advice at all. And, under no circumstances, in an attempt to relate, tell them a horror story about a friend who had cancer. Be there, listen, follow their lead.

If You Don't Know What to Say or Do, Ask

Reliable, consistent help is much more valuable than rare bursts of enthusiasm. Cancer treatments usually last a long time. While people show the most enthusiasm for helping right after diagnosis, your buddy with cancer will need support for a lot longer than that. And, whatever you do, do not offer to help someone unless you are prepared to follow through. Offers of specific help — to deliver meals, drive to appointments, or run errands — work better than "Let me know if you need help."

Your Love Can Save a Person's Life



Your love can save a person's life. Your love is important. My closest friends and family — my biggest supporters — have not just helped me with a few meals or a few rides. They've shown me, at a time when I don't feel like I'm living, that there is a reason I keep going to chemo every day. They show me I at least have a life worth coming back to.

Download the complete guide for free at zenpsychiatry.com.

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