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Thank You!

Seeking
Cancer
Support
Now
Board
Members

CSN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Anjie Cureton, President
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Cancer Thriving and Surviving
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OUR MISSION

We are a volunteer community of individuals affected by cancer dedicated to assisting people diagnosed with cancer and their caregivers so that no one goes through cancer alone.

Our services include our helpline, a variety of support groups, one-on-one support, referrals, education, information and training.

The CSN Newsletter is a quarterly publication of Cancer Support Now, Inc.
PO Box 377338

Albuquerque NM, 87176

www.cancersupportnow.org

info@cancersupportnow.org

www.facebook.com/cancersupportnow

Editor: Marcia Reifman, mreifman@q.com

For Support and information

Call our Helpline at

505 255 0405 or toll free 855 955 3500

ALL CSN Support Services are free

We are a working board and members are expected to assist with activities and events

Time commitment-monthly meetings in the afternoon of the second Sunday/month.

Board members must have experience of cancer as a survivor, family caregiver, or in oncology health care.

CANCER SUPPORT NOW IS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

Available opportunities include:

- Representing Cancer Support Now at a community health fair
- Providing peer support for a person newly diagnosed with cancer and/or for a caregiver of a loved one with cancer
- Assisting with marketing tasks (distributing flyers and newsletters to health clinics, senior centers, and other sites)
- Assisting with taking calls, finding resources, and offering peer support on the Helpline
- Train to become a support group facilitator

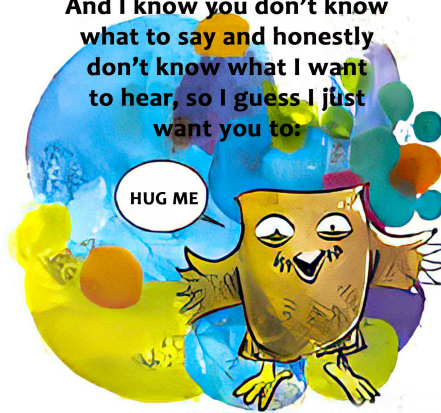
some HUMOR



Dealing with CANCER

is a crazy, hard, weird, confusing effed-up time, and I can be be crazy, weird, and effed-up to deal with sometimes.

And I know you don't know what to say and honestly don't know what I want to hear, so I guess I just want you to:





Life Without a Tongue

by Marcia Reifman

I created *Life Without a Tongue* as a sequel to *Cancer Meets the Isle of Truth* (poems and images inspired by “surviving” a diagnosis and treatment of stage IV tongue cancer.)

My work started as a catharsis for trauma and grief, and as a way to transform pictures of pain into images of beauty. It evolves and grows as I confront and accept loss, the reality of what I am living without, inspired to share my story of living with only a fragment of what used to be a whole tongue and my commitment to have my voice heard, in spite of how I sound when I open my mouth; and to continue my life purpose: authenticity, in me, in you; being who I am and aware of consequences. Always paying attention and inspiring us to find the best in what we do, and then take it further, meeting everyone where they are, and respecting them as they are. To facilitate the expression of our value and importance.

This is my coming out of the closet moment. Disclosing not only my amputation, with no viable prosthetic, resulting in losing my ability to communicate in the way in which I was familiar, similar to losing an arm and not being able to navigate life the way I always did. Ironic, because communication and how words are used predominated my life (and still does.) Now I talk very slowly and not very spontaneously. It isn't about talking, or speaking clearly, it's about being able to say what comes to my mind as quickly as I think it, which usually would lead to connecting for a moment or more with another being.

Life is unfair, often cruel - my choice to continue, and how - to use this unfortunate set of circumstances as a vehicle to express vitality, passion, and strength, still figuring it out, weighing the pros and cons.

What are you living without?

The last we heard from Marcia
She was in the Isle of Truth
Battling the demons
Of cancer treatment
And the long term effects of
RADIATION

Discovering they not only don't
go away
But
Get
Stronger
And unrelenting

Trying to zap her soul
Trying to deplete her will

Stealing her energy
And Life Force

But not quite winning

Now
It's stage II
Long term radiation effects

Reality
Of Life without a Tongue

Forgotten by all
But her

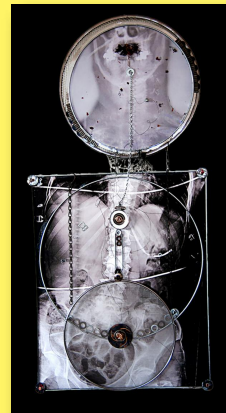
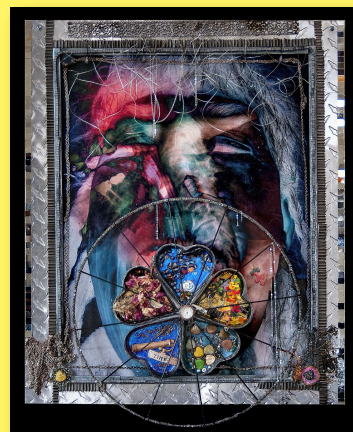
The race is on

Today she is in the lead
Barely ahead by a nose
Or should we say
By
A
Tongue

Stay tuned for the next
episode
As she enters Stage III
of the war

Not knowing when
Or how
Radiation will strike next

Heading for the fallout shelter
That is stocked
With cans of
Lifesaving possibilities



Remembering

66 days of torture
In 10 minute increments

Inserting the shield in my mouth
As 'protection'

“Are you ready for the
POPSICLE STICK ?”

They ask
As if we are anticipating the arrival
Of the Good Humor man

Photo based multimedia constructions derived from PT/CAT scans, photos, printed on fabric, combined with found materials, 16 in x 16 in, 16 in diam, 20 in x 24 in.

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

RUMI

RUMI

SPRING 2026



CANCER SUPPORT NOW
...IN MEMORIAM...



KIRSTEN RAMSAY, 10/14/76 – 2/16/26

Kirstin Ramsay, born October 14, 1976, passed away Monday, February 16, 2026, after a courageous 13 year battle with breast cancer that had metastasized to her brain. Her too-short life was marked with kindness, a spirit of service to others, a fierce love of family, friends and all animals, and an unrelenting quest for adventure travel. She leaves an unfillable hole in the universe of her family and all those who loved her.



In the words of her group members

“Kirsten had adventurous spirit, traveling till just before her death. She was sensitive, kind, and interesting to talk to. She is missed.

Kirsten was too young to go through what she went through, too young to die. She lived as fully as she could, and I will remember her as going out with a bang.

I always looked forward to our Tuesday Zoom support group meetings. Kirsten shared such wonderful and engaging stories about her travels, and I truly admired the courage and determination she showed in exploring new horizons. Her adventurous spirit was an inspiration to us all.

Kirsten chose to walk a path unique to her. Sometimes in utter solitude, sometimes welcoming us in, to share its wonders with her. She had some great adventures, even in her very last days, pushing the limits of her mortality, seeking one more while she was still able to ... leaving only then...

Rest peacefully, Kirsten.”





CONSTANCE SOUZA , July 2, 1935 - 10/28/25



Connie Souza, 90, passed away peacefully on October 28, 2025, surrounded by family. Connie lived a life filled with family, friends, hard work and volunteering. She sang in choirs and was singing before she died. Connie worked for Sandia National Labs in the technical Library before she retired. She was a two-time ovarian cancer survivor and used that blessing to volunteer as a facilitator for groups sponsored by People Living Through Cancer and then for Cancer Support Now. She spoke to medical students at UNM about Ovarian Cancer, sharing her story, and encouraging others to speak as well. Ethics, the ability to think outside the box, and an emotional and intellectual depth in all her endeavors.

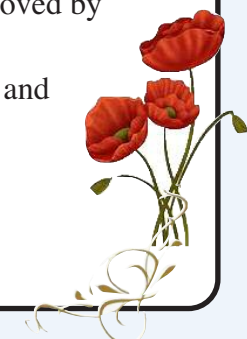
 *In the words of her fellow support group members*

“I knew Connie Souza for almost 2 decades after my fortunate recovery from ovarian cancer. She was a hopeful, guiding force to myself and others. Her leadership at Ovarian Open Arms was helpful to many women struggling through the trials of cancer. My memories of her are centered on her kindness and compassion. She will always be remembered for her contributions.

Connie really cared about the survivors and those in treatment for ovarian cancer. Being a two time survivor herself, she wanted the courageous women to know that one could survive it. She also was one of the original members of "Survivors Teaching Students" at UNM where we told our cancer stories to medical students, focusing on our treatments and our feelings throughout the process. She was passionate about getting the word out about ovarian cancer.

Connie was always a bit of a spitfire - always excited and pushing to get things going with our new support group, and always with a smile and a twinkle of mischief in her eyes. Connie started the Ovarian Open Arms support group along with Marge McCoy, Margaret Goga, and myself. She was adamant that we maintain the schedule and arranged numerous locations for the meetings. We averaged about fifteen participants/month and the group continued for about 15 years. There were several former members of the group in attendance at her funeral service. She was loved by many and missed by all. She was a leader and a fighter. *RIP, Connie.*

Connie had a gift for making everyone feel seen and heard. Her generosity and compassion inspired me to support people with cancer.”





JOHN MARKS

 *In the words of his fellow support group members*



“John joined our cancer survivor group in the spring of 2025, already on hospice, already fully aware of the road before him. From the very beginning, he was matter-of-fact and refreshingly without pretense. He spoke plainly about his esophageal cancer and lymphoma, but he carried himself with steadiness, humor, and an unmistakable lightness of spirit.

He smiled often. He joked easily. When conversations grew heavy, he found gentle ways to lift the mood without ever minimizing the reality of what he was facing.

Behind him, during our Zoom meetings, hung a collection of remarkable masks—colorful, expressive, full of character. Over time, those masks became a quiet symbol of him: artistic, thoughtful, and layered. When members admired them, he gave them away. In fact, he began giving many things away—garden soil he described as heavenly, meaningful possessions accumulated over a lifetime. No one asked. He simply believed it was right not to hold tightly to what he could not take with him.

As his illness progressed, we saw the changes. The weight loss. The fatigue. The frustration of blended food when swallowing became difficult. He missed sessions as his body required more rest. And then, one day, he returned—calmly, almost casually—to tell us he would be leaving this earth four days later. He spoke of his decision with clarity and courage. Even then, he found room for humor, gently lightening our shock with a joke about not “selling seats” for his final day.

That was John—aware of the heaviness in the room, choosing kindness even in his own farewell. He did not seek attention or tribute. But he gave this group a gift: honesty without fear, generosity without hesitation, and courage without spectacle. He reminded us that dignity, humor, and generosity can coexist, even at the end of life.

John brought a steady, generous energy to our circle. And we are better for having known him.

John surrounded himself with beautiful objects from various cultures that he collected during the course of his life and travels around the world. He was interested in various aspects of the world we live in and our interconnectedness with each other. I found his thoughts on living and dying to be profoundly helpful during the time that I knew him. I am grateful for his presence in my life and miss his observations of our world.

John was a quiet, steady presence in our group. Facing death, at the time of his choosing, with a directness and simplicity that was disarming. He could no longer eat, but still loved cooking dinners for his wife. And he loved Monday nights with his music-making friends. He was generous in all things. His presence was both simple and disarming.”





CLARA MARTINEZ, 02/17/1960- 12/14/2025



My mom was kind of two people: she was known as “Nina” to family and known as “Clara” to friends and colleagues. When seeing her as Nina, she was the youngest of 6 children and was very close with her mom when she was alive. When I was younger, my mom hosted family gatherings and was the heart of the group. Family knew her personality as cheerful, silly and vibrant. Laughing, playing games and being surrounded by loved ones, she was at her brightest. She was a very caring mother who always stuck up for me and my brother, made sure we were doing the right thing, and tried to give everything she could when we were growing up. When seeing her as Clara, she was a professional colleague and compassionate friend. She was the first and only one of her siblings to go to college. Her profession was as a bookkeeper, and she took pride in being accurate and well organized. Whether it was as a job or helping friends and family, she wanted people to make smart decisions about their finances. My mom was raised in a Catholic family, but she was not religious herself. She had her own spiritual beliefs and to me she had the strongest moral compass of anyone I have ever known. That moral compass was revealed in her work and staying steadfast in doing what was right.

My mom loved to travel locally and worldwide, whether it was a short trip to hike through native ruins or go to another country and experience their culture. She took the time to appreciate the beauty of nature, art, and music. Even though she loved to travel she still took pride in where she lived, engrossed in the culture and natural landscape of New Mexico, she always wanted to stay rooted there. She is greatly missed by her partner Steve; two sons Stephen and Matthew; two grandsons Maxwell and Everett; and two sisters Gloria and Isabel.



In the words of her fellow support group members

“Clara had become part of the fabric of my life. We talked almost every day, from the day she was diagnosed with stage 4 disease, through the calamities of her cancer treatments and the subsequent hospitalizations, and the recoveries. I was not ready to lose her, and I felt she wasn't yet ready to leave... I will always hold her in my heart.

To all who walked beside her in this cancer journey, you understand the type of strength she carried. She was quiet and soft spoken, yet deeply brave and grounded in her faith. She accepted what came with grace that taught more than words ever could. Through a gentle smile, a listening ear, and the calm comfort she offered even while facing her own struggle. She reminded us that courage is not always loud.

She had a beautiful smile even when she was so fragile. I'm sorry I didn't get a chance to know her better.

I feel like she was gone too soon. I didn't know her well, but I do know she was sweet and kind. May Clara rest peacefully in the arms of God. She is missed from our group. I wish we could have spent more time in group together. Prayers for her loved ones.”





Thank you!

- *Are you a cancer survivor or do you love and care for someone who is a cancer survivor?*
- *Have you called our Helpline to get support and resources?*
- *Are you a support group member or facilitator?*

We offer our Helpline, support groups, and conference free to everyone. But we can only continue to do this thanks to donations from those who value our services.

Any amount helps! Please donate today!

If you would prefer to donate your time, we are always seeking new board members and volunteers. **Please contact the Helpline if you are interested.**
"Thank you for always being there when I need to talk."

Caregiver grieving loss of brother to lung cancer

"You've helped me more than you know."

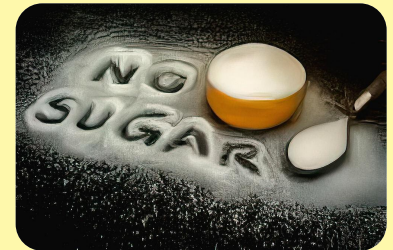
Breast cancer survivor

"Your words tread softly on my heart. No one has ever spoken to me with respect and validation as you do."

Colon cancer survivor

Debunking the Myths Around Sugar

Questions about sugar are common in cancer nutrition, and widespread myths can make the topic feel confusing and frightening. The claim that "sugar feeds cancer" is especially harmful, as it creates unnecessary anxiety based on misinformation. Addressing these myths with accurate information can help you feel more confident about your nutrition before, during, and after treatment.



Myth 1: "Cancer feeds on sugar"

Fact: While it is true that cancer cells consume more glucose than normal cells, this does not translate as eating more sugar will cause cancer cells to grow. Sugar, in the form of glucose, is the preferred source of energy for all cells in the body. Glucose is super important, so much so that the body will convert protein or fats into glucose in the absence of carbohydrates or sugars.

Myth 2: "By eliminating sugar/carbs from the diet, you can starve the cancer"

Fact: This is a common misconception. In reality, cancer cells are incredibly resourceful at finding energy sources and will use amino acids from protein or fatty acids from fats to create glucose. This means the cancer cells will get energy with or without sugar and carbs.

Myth 3: "Sugar causes cancer"

Fact: Sugar is not a carcinogen. However, high sugar intake can be related to excess weight gain. Excessive weight gain and obesity can lead to other health problems that can increase the risk for cancer through increases in inflammation and insulin resistance.

Key Takeaways:

Added sugars should be eaten in moderation.

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends no more than 10% of your daily calories should come from added sugars
- The American Heart Association recommends no more than 6 tsp for women and no more than 9 tsp for men per day

Having some sugar occasionally won't harm your health or fuel cancer.

- What matters most is an overall healthy diet: limit processed foods, focus on whole foods like fruits and vegetables, get enough protein and fluids, and maintain a healthy weight.

Pairing sugary foods with protein, healthy fats, or fiber.

- Can help slow down how quickly sugar enters your bloodstream and prevent blood sugar spikes.

So, eat the cake at the celebration or have a small treat.

- As a reward for a day of nutritious eating. Nutrition is just as much about the experience as it is the nourishment.

All CSN support groups are currently meeting on Zoom, except those designated with red asterisks: ***. Using Zoom, we are able to include individuals who live outside Bernalillo County. In addition, we are able to support individuals while they are going through treatment, as they can attend groups from home. For those of you who struggle with computers in general, or Zoom in particular, we are happy to assist you in learning how to join us remotely. Please contact Anjie Cureton at 505-925-0104 if you are choosing to join a support group and need help using Zoom.

To join a group, or to learn which group and/or services might support you best, please call our Helpline. When you decide on which group feels right for you, we will connect you with the group facilitator who will send you a zoom invitation to join the group or will explain where the group will meet. For all those who are unable to use a web-based platform, you may use any cell or landline phone to call in and participate in any of these groups by phone. For those of you who would like our other free services, just call the Helpline.

Please call our Helpline for direct and/or ongoing support for patients/survivors and/or loved ones challenged by cancer and/or to be referred to one of our groups or services: 505-255-0405.

LGBTQ+CANCER PEER SUPPORT Referrals:

Jeff Hurley and Deb Openden: Call our Helpline to be connected..

PANCREATIC CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Patients/survivors and/or caregivers of pancreatic cancer. All stages, men & women. Second & fourth Thursdays, 3:30 - 5:00 pm. *Jim Pitcher & Lillie Ortiz*

UNM/CSN Friends and Family Writing Together

Journaling Support Group for Grief or Anticipatory Grief. For caregivers of someone with any type of cancer. Every Thursday 4:00 - 5:30 p.m. *Eleanor Schick & Anjie Cureton*

WOMEN'S CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Women only, all diagnoses. Caregivers welcome. Every other Thursday, 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. *Geri Stayman*

SANDIA CANCER SUPPORT GROUP ***

Survivors, all cancers, all stages, men and women, 2nd Wednesday, noon-1:00pm. Sandia Base. *Christina Chavez*

SANTA FE WOMEN'S GROUP SURVIVING SISTERS

All diagnoses, all stages, all women. 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 4:00- 5:30 pm. *Ms. Fred & Emily Haozous.*

U27 (UNDER 27 YEARS OLD)

Peer Support: Kimberly Craft.
Call our Helpline to be connected

UNM/CSN SURVIVORS WRITING TOGETHER

Journaling Support Group for survivors, men & women, all diagnoses. Every Monday, 2:30 - 4:00 pm. *Anjie Cureton & Eleanor Schick*

UNM/CSN ADVANCED CANCER SURVIVORS WRITING TOGETHER

Journaling Support Group for survivors of metastatic cancer, men & women, all diagnoses. Every Tuesday, 3:30 - 5:00 pm. *Anjie Cureton & Eleanor Schick*

TAOS CANCER SUPPORT ***

Survivors of all cancers, all stages, Men and Women. Meets every Tuesday, 4:00 to 5:30 pm. *Mary Short & Colby Senescu.* Call Christy Elliott at Taos Cancer Support Office: 575-751-8927. TaosCancerSupport.org

CREATE TO HEAL

Using art, music, writing, meditation to explore the journey of cancer Survivors and/or caregivers, all diagnoses, men or women One-on-one sessions, by appointment Patricia Varga Call our Helpline for more information

ONE-ON-ONE PEER CANCER SUPPORT OR PEER MATCHING

Survivor to Survivor and/or Caregiver to Caregiver (by phone)

COMMUNITY CANCER NAVIGATION

Referrals to assistance for non-medical needs. For patients, survivors and/or their loved ones. Call our Helpline for more information

RELAXATION SUPPORT SESSIONS provided by phone

Learn Stress Management Techniques to Deal with Cancer. For Cancer Patients/survivors, and/or their caregivers. Offered by *Jean Stouffer*, Certified Hypnotherapist. Call our Helpline for more information

SMOKING CESSATION

Patricia Torn on Zoom or by phone. Call our Helpline for more information

CAREGIVER SUPPORT (Educational Sessions)

Patricia Torn on Zoom or by phone. Call our Helpline for more information

FREE CANCER SUPPORT NOW SERVICES • For Information, call our helpline: 505 255 0405

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

*** indicates in person meetings

PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT ASSOCIATION OF NEW MEXICO (PCSANM) ***

First & third Saturday, Meetings are in person.
[View Website](#)

THE GYNECOLOGICAL AWARENESS PROJECT

Support for anyone with a gynecological cancer. Call for info: Kat Adams at 505-610-9300; Email: kat@thegcap.org

HEAD, NECK & ESOPHAGEAL CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Men & women, all stages. Second & 4th Mondays. 4:00-5:00 pm. Jess Quiring: 1-913-991-8848

COMMUNITY GIFT CLOSET FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Free wigs, hats, post mastectomy bras & breast prostheses. Wednesdays, 10:00 am - 1:00 p.m. All cancer patients are welcome
New Mexico Cancer Center: 505-842-8171

HEALING TOUCH

for Survivors & Caregivers, men & women, in person, by appointment. Call Deanna Flores, Nurse Navigator, Lovelace Cancer Center: 505-727-3041.

CANCER SERVICES OF NEW MEXICO ***

Family Cancer Retreat, Spring & Fall, call Janet: 505-288-0331

FORCE (FACING OUR RISK OF CANCER EMPOWERED)

Support for those with genetic mutations:
<https://www.facingourrisk.org>
Peer Support in New Mexico: Lou Wilburn: 505-507-3347

ALBUQUERQUE NETS (NEUROENDOCRINE/CARCINOID SUPPORT GROUP)

Terry Nelson: 505-298-6356. or nls306@aol.com.
[view website](#)

WRITE TO HEAL

A FREE ONLINE WRITING WORKSHOP

Based on (but not limited by) the life-changing diagnosis of cancer. Call or email Joanne Brown: 510-381-1205 or joanne@joannebrown.com.

LAND OF ENCHANTMENT MULTIPLE MYELOMA GROUP- Men & Women: Patients, Caregivers & Adult Family Members ***

1st Wednesday each month , 11:00-12:30pm Contact: Susan Benjamin: 505.690.4597 or [<Benjamin4@cyber-mesa.com>](mailto:Benjamin4@cyber-mesa.com) Or John DeFlice: 505-897-4167 or [<jdeflice@gmail.com>](mailto:jdeflice@gmail.com) More info here

OSTOMATE SUPPORT GROUP of CENTRAL NEW MEXICO ***

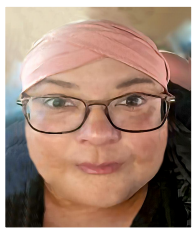
This is a support group for individuals living with an ostomy and their caregivers and families. It is also for those who may need to have an ostomy and want to learn more about it. North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center on the Second Saturday at 1 PM. Meeting in person. Call Barbara D'Amore at 505-797-4388 More info here

DESERT SOUTHWEST CANCER

SUPPORT GROUP in Las Cruces ***

Survivors or Caregivers of all cancers, all stages, men & women. In person: 4th Saturday, 10:00 am to Noon. Virtually the following Monday, 6:00 pm. Call or text Maricela Sandoval: 505-453-1789 or email: [<cancerwarriors.desert.sw@gmail.com>](mailto:cancerwarriors.desert.sw@gmail.com)

MORE RESOURCES



PROVEER APOYO EN ESPANOL

Mi nombre es Sylvia. Soy una sobreviviente del cáncer de mama desde hace 3 años, de los cuales la mitad han sido de la etapa cuatro. He recibido quimioterapia, radiación, y unas cirugías. Estoy disponible para proveer apoyo de pares

para escucharlos, apoyarlos emocionalmente y asistirlos a encontrar recursos comunitarios.

My name is Sylvia. I am a 3-year breast cancer survivor of which half has been with stage IV cancer. I've had chemo, radiation, and a couple of surgeries. I am available for peer support to listen, support you emotionally, and help you find community resources.

sylvia.apoyodepares@gmail.com

575. 277.8645

How Pelvic Floor Therapy Can Help During Cancer

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

Managing Cancer-Related Fatigue

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)