

Breaking Up With Cancer

By Wendy Hammers

As part of our Patient & Family Webinars series, Wendy Hammers [shares](#) her 10 tenets that have supported her since her diagnosis in 2015, throughout her treatment, and continue to guide her as a pancreatic cancer survivor.

1. Adopting a Wellness Stance

Assume health. Decide you are getting better. You do not have to assume the worst. Assume the best. In the words of [Dr. Christy Funk](#), “You are a survivor from the moment you get diagnosed, because you didn’t die.” Surround yourself with people, places and things that believe in your positive outcome. Create your wellness bubble and block CNN, the “constant negative news.” There is nothing to be gained by thinking the worst. It is amazing how optimism can literally affect your outcome.

2. Fierce Listening

Listen! With your whole heart, to the still, small voice inside, to the gut feelings. Listen to your team. Listen to your compassionate tribe. And listen to yourself, above all. If your doctor does not feel right, or makes you feel more sick, or doesn’t support your wellness stance, there are others – make your healthcare team work for you. Listen to your body, if you think a purple crystal will help, try it!

3. Radical Self Compassion

Decide to love yourself. Love every single part of yourself. Extreme kindness helped save my life, it can work for you too. Be compassionate to yourself as you go through treatment and the

different ways it will change your body & what you are able to do.

4. Learning to Receive

Let others help you heal. Now is not the time to go it alone, you do not need to be a hero. You need support, and people want to support you. Learn to receive help and you set up a boomerang health cycle. Accept help. Once you are well, you'll be able to pay it forward.

5. Stillness as a Spiritual Practice

"Don't just do something, sit there." – [Sylvia Boorstein](#).
Cancer will slow you down, take that as a good thing.

6. Serious Sense of Humor

Loopy Loopenstein is my alter ego, the me on drugs from the hospital. I decided to find the joy and humor in things. People will do weird and unhelpful things, laugh it off, it is the only way.

7. Cultivating a Kick ass Community

Build your Recovery Tribe. Healing is a family affair. There are people who want to support you and help you, find them and surround yourself with them.

8. Taking a Day off from Cancer

Because everyone needs a day off, even cancer patients. Find something, a day, a concert, something where you can decide to exist as someone without cancer. This might also be deciding that you want to help others. Small acts of kindness for others go a long way in lifting spirits and feeling like you are

contributing.

9. Woo Woo Woo

My deep dive into alternate healing modalities to supplement my traditional treatment. Supplements, feng shui, sound baths, writing workshops, crystals. I started thinking of it as a project I was doing, a project to get well. I tried all sorts of things that made sense to me, and then when people suggested ridiculous things, I listened deeply and decided if it felt right for me.

10. Life Beyond the Project

“Tell me – what is it that you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” – [Mary Oliver](#)

I spent a lot of time thinking about what my life would look like on the other side of cancer. I spent so much time thinking about my really cool life, I didn't have time to be scared.

Additional Resources:



Wellness Coach – [Marisa Harris](#)



Bodyworker/healer – [James Arena](#)



Tibetan Sound Bowls – [Jahna and Michael](#)



[Cancer Support Community Los Angeles](#)

Want to speak directly to Wendy? Reach out here:

Living with Pancreatic Cancer: Patient And Caregiver Experiences Study (PACES) Seeks Volunteers

The “Living with Pancreatic Cancer: Patient And Caregiver Experiences Study (PACES),” conducted by Dr. Annette Stanton is seeking volunteers. Dr. Stanton is a 2016 [Seed Grant Awardee](#) and spoke at the [2018 Symposium](#) on the importance of managing the emotional journey, for both pancreatic cancer patients and their caregivers. PACES continues Dr. Stanton’s esteemed career of working to improve the psychological and physical health of patients & caregivers over the course of the cancer trajectory.

Living with Pancreatic Cancer: Patient And Caregiver Experiences Study (PACES)

Introduction:

When diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, adults and their loved ones often do not know what to expect. It is important for both affected individuals and their medical teams to understand the likely physical, psychological, and social consequences of the experiences, as well as useful strategies for living with and beyond the disease and its treatment. By taking part in the current study, you can advance the understanding of the experience of pancreatic cancer, and pave the way for the

development of approaches to promote quality of life and health for adults living with pancreatic cancer.

Why is the study being conducted?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the physical and psychological well-being of individuals with pancreatic cancer and their caregivers (e.g., spouse).

Who can participate?

Individuals with a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer and their primary caregivers are invited to take part in this study.

What is involved?

Participants will complete one 90 minute in-person session at UCLA as well as three questionnaires over the course of four months. Questionnaires about topics such as physical and psychological experiences, coping with pancreatic cancer, and your relationship with your caregiver or individual with pancreatic cancer. Participation is completely voluntary and participants will be compensated \$40 each for their time.

How can I contact the study team to learn about the study and take part?

Email our study at paces.ucla@gmail.com. The Principal Investigator for the study is Dr. Annette Stanton at UCLA.

This study is closed for recruitment.



HIRSHBERG FOUNDATION
FOR PANCREATIC CANCER RESEARCH

A Research Study of University of California, Los Angeles

Thriving in a year of challenges & change!

Dear Hirshberg Foundation Family,

On behalf of all of us at the Hirshberg Foundation, we hope this letter finds you safe and in good health. The past six months have not been easy for anyone, including businesses and non-profits. Normally, this time of year I would write to share our progress in research and news on grants we hope to fund. However, 2020 has caused us to pivot from our typical path. I am pleased, however, that I can share how well we have all adapted. Your donations and support have helped us thrive during these difficult times.

First, we'd like to share good news for our dedicated donors. Under the [CARES Act of 2020](#), donors can now get a Federal Income

Tax deduction for charitable contributions up to 100% off their Adjusted Gross Income. This opportunity is slated to end December 31, 2020 but it can be used in subsequent years as well. Please consult your tax advisor whether this option will work for you and share this information with family and friends who have or will support us this year.

I am also happy to share what a wonderful job our staff is doing imagining creative ways to keep us afloat. Our annual Symposium was quickly replaced in April with our new [Patient & Caregiver Webinar Series](#). Our wonderful UCLA doctors generously connected with our community on Zoom to discuss updates in chemotherapy, clinical trials, cannabis research, surgery and more. This has included mental health topics, from a nurse's guide during treatment to the effects of positive thinking while battling pancreatic cancer. While each session was virtual, we enjoy seeing each face and [every video is now available on our website](#).

Today in-person events are still not an option, but we have adjusted brilliantly with how we engage supporters. We've been busy organizing two virtual events. Our reimagined [Tour de Pier was a success](#) and the [Virtual LA Cancer Challenge](#) coming up on October 25th! I hope you will participate in the LACC wherever you are – its success and fundraising are fundamental to ending this disease. You and your loved ones can [register today](#) at www.lacancerchallenge.com.

I am humbled by your consistent support and thank you from the bottom of my heart for your “never give up” attitude while we search for the cure! The times we are living in are difficult for all of us, but our commitment to fight for a cancer-free life is a promise we will keep.

All the best,



Agi Hirshberg
Founder

Two Perspectives, One Journey: Caregiving for the Pancreatic Cancer Patient

For those who have been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer or have a loved one who has, you know all too well that it's not just the patient whose life is immediately affected upon diagnosis. Although family members and close friends do their best to jump into high gear to help, the person who is thrust into the position of primary caregiver carries the bulk of the weight on their shoulders.

Caregiving can be filled with rewards and joy but it can also be overwhelming and exhausting. The caregiver is most often the spouse, child or a close friend that takes on the role of organizer, note taker, nurse, researcher, news central, housekeeper, cook, driver, cheerleader and so much more. Initially the pancreatic cancer patient has no idea what their

needs will be and the caregiver is clueless as to what will be expected of them. Too often the role of caregiving lands on someone who feels ill-equipped to fill all of these necessary shoes. In some cases, the patient lives alone and there is no obvious caregiver to speak of.

Pancreatic cancer support groups in-person or online provide important supportive services but there are still basic needs that have to be met in the home and often, round the clock. This webinar will help guide the patient and caregiver to better understand and prepare for what lies ahead.

Dr. Annette Stanton joins us to present important information about how each person may be affected during this stressful time. [Dr. Stanton's](#) research centers on identifying factors that help and hinder individuals as they adjust to health-related adversity. Her research tests theories of stress, coping and how individuals and couples confront cancer and other chronically stressful experiences. Her career has focused on answering questions such as, "when adults face profound and prolonged stressors, what factors enhance or impede their well-being and health?" and "how can research that specifies those factors be translated into approaches to enhance psychological and physical health outcomes during chronically stressful experiences?"

[Annette L. Stanton](#), PhD, is Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry/Biobehavioral Sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles, a member of the Center for Cancer Prevention and Control Research in the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, and senior research scientist at the UCLA Cousins Center for Psychoneuroimmunology. She is incoming Chair of the Department of Psychology and currently chairs the PhD program in health psychology. Through research, Dr. Stanton identifies factors that promote or impede psychological and physical health in adults and couples undergoing chronically stressful

experiences, with a focus on the experience of cancers of the pancreas, breast, eye, and lung. She then translates her findings into action by developing and testing approaches to enhance psychological and physical health over the course of the cancer trajectory.

[Learn more about Dr. Stanton's PACES study and apply to be involved »](#)

Watch Webinar

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A very special thanks to our Sponsors & Supporters for helping ensure that these vital patient resources can be offered free-of-charge in place of our Annual Symposium.

The logo for Novocure, featuring the word "novocure" in a bold, sans-serif font. The "nov" is in a light blue color, and "ocure" is in a darker blue. A small "TM" trademark symbol is positioned to the upper right of the "e".

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The 2020 LA Cancer Challenge Honorary Medical Chair is Dr. Hines of UCLA

While the 23rd Annual LACC Walk/Run will be virtual, supporting our medical and research community is more important than ever. The Hirshberg Foundation is thrilled to announce our [2020 LA Cancer Challenge Honorary Medical Chair](#) is Dr. O. Joe Hines! Dr. Hines is nationally renowned in the field of pancreatic surgery. He is the esteemed [Chief of General Surgery at UCLA's](#) David Geffen School of Medicine and Director of the General Surgery residency Program. Dr. Hines is on the team of the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases and a member of the Hirshberg Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board.

Dr. Hines is more than a doctor to his patients and countless families touched by pancreatic cancer. He is a part of our Foundation family, committed to our mission and dedicated to this community. He continues to be a guest speaker at our Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer, speaking on topics from [personalized medicine and tumor testing](#) to [advances in pancreatic surgery](#) and a [team approach for pancreatic cancer](#). He attends Agi Hirshberg's intimate backyard BBQ event for patients and caregivers, spending time with people one-on-one to answer

questions and listen to their stories. He has also attended the LACC as a member of the UCLA Surgery and Health Sciences Team, setting an example of how important it is to answer a call-to-action as both a doctor and a member of the LACC family.

We thank Dr. Hines for filling this important role as LACC Honorary Medical Chair and thank him for participating in our Virtual LACC Walk/Run on Sunday, October 25, 2020!

More about Dr. O. Joe Hines

Dr. Hines is the Chief of the Division of General Surgery at UCLA where he has served as a professor of surgery since 1997. Dr. Hines is a nationally renowned scholar in the areas of pancreatic surgery, complex abdominal surgery, and advanced laparoscopic surgery. As the Director of the General Surgery residency program at UCLA, Dr. Hines has overseen the training of a generation of young surgeons. A true master surgeon who has also authored over 200 scientific manuscripts and book chapters and whose research has been consistently funded by NIH.

August is National Wellness Month

It's National Wellness Month – a perfect time to re-introduce self-care into our daily lives. As we all face extraordinary challenges in 2020, the Hirshberg Foundation is offering resources, webinars, fitness activities and tools to support your mind and body health. In August, we'll share several topics that will inspire and motivate – here's to a healthy August!

Resources for the Mind:

CANNABIS AND ONCOLOGY: WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Patient & Family Webinar Series

[Join us on August 28th with Dr. Noah Federman](#) to learn more about cannabis and oncology. In Dr. Federman's clinical oncology practice, he uses cannabis and cannabinoid compounds as adjunctive therapies and has a keen interest in how they can help patients. He will share the science behind the many anecdotal stories in this ever-emerging field.

BREAKING UP WITH PANCREATIC CANCER: SURVIVOR STORIES

Patient & Family Webinar Series

Two incredible long-term survivors share their stories and tips for taking a wellness approach with pancreatic cancer. Wendy Hammers, an actress, speaker, and 5-year survivor leads a discussion alongside Marisa Harris, a life coach and 21-year, stage-4 pancreatic cancer survivor. [Learn about setting your own healthy path](#) and how to get yourself in the right mental space to tackle any life change during diagnosis and beyond.

COPING SKILLS FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

Tools and Tips During COVID-19

During this time of uncertainty, stress levels can skyrocket, especially for cancer patients. Emotional well-being is a critical piece of the healing process, so now, more than ever, it is essential to have [coping skills](#). We turned to Elizabeth Cleary, PhD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist at the Simms/Mann UCLA Center for Integrative Oncology, to lead an [interactive webinar](#).

MANAGING THE EMOTIONAL JOURNEY

Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer

Dr. Annette Stanton, PhD, has significantly contributed to the Hirshberg Foundation's Symposium for Pancreatic Cancer as a guest speaker. In her ["Managing the Emotional Journey"](#) Symposium video, she discusses how important it is to understand the emotional journey that cancer patients and loved ones experience once diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. As a Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry/ Biobehavioral Sciences, Stanton has researched factors that promote or impede psychological and physical health in adults and couples undergoing chronically stressful experiences. She then translates her findings into action by developing and testing approaches to enhance psychological and physical health over the course of the cancer trajectory.

Resources for the Body:

COOKING HEALTHY WITH DR. LI

Cooking Class Video & Recipes

[Symposium speaker Dr. Zhaoping Li](#), the Director of the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition, and Chef Claire Hansen of Sur la Table gathered with survivors, caregivers and instructors cook up [healthy recipes](#) including Lemon-Barley Pilaf with Chicken and Thyme, Oven-Roasted Cod and Strawberry Smoothies. Before you start cooking these delicious recipes, check out our newest Purple E-Store item, a [Never Give Up](#) apron benefiting pancreatic cancer research!

TOUR DE PIER

Join Us for a Virtual Tour de Pier on September 13, 2020

Tour de Pier is back, in a whole new way! On September 13, 2020, we're going virtual. Your [registration](#) will help ensure that our three charities can continue to provide crucial resources to those facing cancer. Plus, since we're virtual, we have options to ensure that everyone can get involved.

23rd ANNUAL VIRTUAL LA CANCER CHALLENGE

Walk/Run Any Time, Place, or Pace you Choose

The 23rd Annual [Virtual LA Cancer Challenge Walk/Run](#) on Sunday, October 25th will now take place nationwide at any time, place or pace you choose! We've got plenty of resources & ideas to customize your participation, a Purple Spirit Kit to get festively purple, a [Virtual FB Group](#) to share ideas and Ambassadors to inspire and lead the way. Your commitment and passion to find a cure burns bright and our LACC walk/run is when we shine the brightest. Learn More about our virtual event resources and register today!

LEARN THE RISKS & SYMPTOMS OF PANCREATIC CANCER

People with certain risk factors may be more likely than others to develop cancer of the pancreas. Pancreatic cancer symptoms are often barely noticeable or could be associated with other medical conditions. It is crucial that we all have a better understanding of [how the pancreas functions](#), what puts [those at higher risk](#), what all of the [known risk factors](#) include and the [symptoms](#) that could indicate cancer. We share these resources and tools in an effort to prevent and detect pancreatic cancer early.

HIRSHBERG TRAINING TEAM

Train for the LA Marathon, honor a loved one and cross the finish line

The iconic LA Marathon is a rewarding and memorable race experience as you run from Dodger Stadium to Century City's Avenue of the Stars! Training is a commitment to your mental and physical health, a great reason to get active, and a priceless opportunity to honor a loved one and raise funds research and patient programs. Plus, we've got great

fundraising prizes and HTT gear to help motivate you. With training options that fit even the busiest of schedules, there's nothing stopping you from making the commitment to cross the finish line on Sunday, March 21, 2021. [Register today!](#)

At the Hirshberg Foundation we are committed to supporting the health and wellness of our patients. This National Wellness Month, help **support these services benefitting the pancreatic cancer community** by making a [much-needed donation](#) today!