

Cancer: Thriving & Surviving (A Living Well Self-Management Program)

The **Cancer: Thriving & Surviving Program** is a workshop conducted once a week, for six weeks, in community settings such as senior centers, churches, libraries and hospitals. People who have been affected by cancer attend together. Workshops are facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are non-health professionals who are cancer survivors.

What happens in a workshop?

Workshop groups meet once a week for six weeks. There are typically ten to sixteen participants in each workshop and participants learn about:

- techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, pain, isolation, poor sleep and living with uncertainty,
- appropriate exercise for regaining and maintaining flexibility, and endurance,
- making decisions about treatment and complementary therapies,
- communicating effectively with family, friends, and health professionals,
- nutrition,
- setting priorities, and
- relationships

Classes are highly participative, where mutual support and success build the participants' confidence in their ability to manage their health and maintain active and fulfilling lives.

What does it cost to attend?

It is free of charge for participants and each one will receive a copy of *Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions, 4th Edition*, and an audio relaxation CD, *Relaxation for Mind and Body*.

Registration is required.

Who leads the workshops?

The workshops are led by two leaders who have received special training. One or both of the volunteer leaders are cancer survivors or directly connected to cancer themselves.

Does the Program replace existing programs and treatments?

The **Cancer: Thriving & Surviving Program** will not conflict with existing programs or treatment. It is designed to enhance regular treatment and cancer-specific education. The program gives survivors the skills to coordinate everything needed to manage their health, as well as to help them remain active.

How was the Program developed?

The Cancer: Thriving and Surviving (CTS) Workshop was originally adapted from the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP), at the Macmillan Cancer Support Trust in the United Kingdom. It was tested for effectiveness in the UK and in the USA and further developed by the Division of Family and Community Medicine in the [School of Medicine at Stanford University](#). The Stanford Patient Education Research Center moved in 2018! Since 2018 the Self-Management Resource Center (SMRC) remains dedicated to helping improve health status and self-management skills.

What were the results?

Participants, who took the program, when compared to those who did not, demonstrated significant improvements in exercise, cognitive symptom management, communication with physicians, self-reported general health, health distress, fatigue, disability, and social/role activities limitations. They also spent fewer days in the hospital with a trend toward fewer outpatient visits and hospitalizations. Many of these results persist for as long as three years.

Who should attend **Cancer: Thriving & Surviving Program** workshops?

We recommend anyone who has been touched by cancer, whether newly diagnosed, a survivor, caregiver, family member or friend be referred to a workshop. Attendees should be at least 18 years old, have good mental functioning and be able to get to the workshops. The workshop is also beneficial for people who have been coping with cancer for many years.

All workshops are currently free of charge, six weeks in length and meet once a week for 2 ½ hours at various locations throughout the county. Each participant will receive a manual and relaxation CD following completion of the workshop.

Interested individuals should call Lily Hilferty (CCHD) at 410.996.5168 or Holly Loss (DCS) at 410.996.8170 to register for a free workshop. Healthcare providers wishing to refer individuals to a workshop may also call Lily Hilferty at 410.996.5168 or Holly Loss at 410.996.8170.

For additional information contact Sheila Murphy, Department of Community Services, at 410.996.8437 or by email: smurphy@ccgov.org.

Or visit these websites:

Cecil County Department of Community Services:

<https://www.ccgov.org/government/community-services/community-wellness-division/living-well-health-programs>

Cecil County Health Department: <http://www.cecilcountyhealth.org/ccdhxx/livingwell.htm>

Self-Management Resource Center: <https://www.selfmanagementresource.com/>



The **Cancer: Thriving & Surviving Program** is provided through a partnership between the Department of Community Services and the Cecil County Health Department.