



Some Thoughts on Support, Education, and Advocacy...

Within local chapters, Support is the heart of what we do. Over and over again, we see how the gathering of men in our sharing circles (and very importantly, the parallel gathering of spouses/female supporters) dissipates the stormy sea of fear and agony that so often swells up when we're newly diagnosed. We each must reach emotionally calm waters before we can broadly scan our horizons, rationally chart a course that feels right to us, and make truly informed decisions about our treatment.

We need accurate, up-to-date knowledge to reinforce the empathic expressions of understanding and compassion we validate and amplify in our gatherings. Us TOO is a primary source of Education specific to our needs. The information it gathers, organizes, and distributes gives direction to our basic human reflex to care for and comfort those in emotional turmoil.

This combination of support and education results in credible efforts to Advocate survivorship strategies. Together, these three components provide local chapters with perspective to maintain a viable program that draws people to us, to keep many of them loyal to our cause, and to enable us to effectively reach out to others who need to know about us.

Of course, we all accept that life gets in the way of making this smooth sailing and for our system, as well as the individuals coping with cancer, there are rough and dangerous seas ahead. But we have purpose and collective courage to make it to the next safe harbor. We work to keep our craft afloat, righted, sound, and on course, banking on the trade winds of science and our internal guidance systems to propel and guide us toward the promise of a shining sea that reflects the blue sky above.

Ken Willmarth
Us TOO Support Group Leader
Modesto, CA