

# Ask *the* Expert

## Cancer Support

This time of year calls a lot of attention to cancer. September was ovarian cancer and prostate cancer awareness month. October is deemed breast cancer awareness month. As people face the challenges of cancer, it is important to note available resources to help patients, families and friends cope.

### WHAT IS A SUPPORT GROUP?

Support groups are generally made up of individuals and/or family members who meet with a health care professional or mental health professional. Characteristics of support groups include:

1. Support groups are open to anyone who shares a common concern.



2. Support groups meet on a regularly scheduled, ongoing basis.
3. Participation is voluntary.
4. Opportunities are provided for discussion and for sharing experiences.
5. There is no cost for attending.

### WHY A CANCER SUPPORT GROUP?

A cancer diagnosis often brings with it overwhelming feelings of fear and uncertainty. Lives are turned upside down. Nothing is the same. Life is no longer predictable. As a result, people with cancer may begin to isolate themselves from others. They may feel they need to shield family and friends from what they're going through. They may feel they need to hide their feelings of anger and fear. A cancer support

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group may help to ease this sense of isolation and reduce the feelings of anger and fear.

### WHAT DO YOU TALK ABOUT IN A CANCER SUPPORT GROUP?

People with cancer want to learn how to live with their illness. Common themes that arise in cancer support groups include:

1. Learning to manage feelings of sadness, fear, and anger
2. Learning about what to expect as treatment begins/continues
3. Learning where to find more information/assistance, if needed
4. Learning how to regain a sense of control
5. Learning how to trust life again

NEA Baptist Fowler Family Center for Cancer Care has partnered with Families, Inc.

Counseling Services to make a cancer support group available. It is led by Families, Inc. therapist, Sharon Travis, who is a Licensed Certified Social Worker with 37 years of experience.

### WHO CAN ATTEND?

Currently, this meeting is for those that have cancer and those that have survived cancer, caregivers, and/or families and friends in their support system.

### HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION/ WHEN IS THE NEXT MEETING?

You may contact the Fowler Family Center for Cancer Care at 870.936.7000 for more information.

The cancer support group meets the first and third Tuesday of the month.

The next support group meeting is Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2014, at 12 noon, in the conference room at the center.