



# ARRIVING AT SELF-AWARENESS, LEADING TOWARD EMPOWERMENT



The World Health Organization has defined empowerment as *“A process through which people gain greater control over decisions and actions affecting their health.”*

*Empowerment is a process in which patients understand their role, are given the knowledge, and skills by their health-care provider to perform a task in an environment that recognizes community and cultural differences and encourages patient participation.*

## INTRODUCTION

In Module 2, we meet six amazing individuals who will provide you with tips, takeaways and strategies help you to become more empowered. We invite you to complete these exercises in the worksheet and activate your power within.





## Module 2:

Patient Empowerment Through  
the Healthcare Journey



Cultivating  
Empowerment as a  
Patient (Dana Donofree)

### Lesson 1



Providers Empowering &  
Protecting Their Patients  
(Dr. Monique Gary)

### Lesson 2



Peer-to-Peer Patient  
Empowerment  
(Jonny Imerman)

### Lesson 3

### Lesson 4

The Transformative  
Power of Education  
(Dr. Marisa Weiss)



### Lesson 5

Holistic Health &  
Survivorship  
(Sue Weldon)



### Lesson 6

Empowering  
Communities of Color  
(Roslyn Daniels)



Thank you to our teachers for guiding these lessons on  
Patient Empowerment Through the Healthcare Journey!



## Stand Your Ground



**STAND FIRM. BE ROOTED. GROW IN YOUR EMPOWERMENT.**

How have you learned to become more empowered?

Cancer brings many challenges, along with it - learning about your diagnosis, tests, treatment and a myriad of other things you need to know in order to navigate the journey. Some people feel that at some point in their journey, there is a shift, where they acquire a new “superpower” they never knew they had, learning to tune into their mind, body, and soul, with more focus, purpose, and a renewed appreciation for life.

What life lessons has cancer forced you to evaluate?

How can you create a shift within these learnings to feel empowered?



### How can empowerment support your healthcare journey?

#### Social

There are many different types of social circles. Social empowerment can come from membership, group supports and participation in advocacy groups.



List what social activities or networks empower you?

What kind of activities can you get involved in that could bring you joy and fulfillment?





### Educational

Knowledge is power. This is true in so many ways. The more educated you are about the disease, testing, treatment plan, healthcare team and survivorship, the more empowered you are for your journey.



List various ways you are currently learning about your health and treatment options

List ways you have gained a deeper understanding of your diagnosis, treatment options and services available. Some of the ways you've become more engaged in learning about these topics.





### Economic

Knowing what to expect when it comes to finances is an important part of your treatment journey. There are expenses you will need to plan for, and some that you may not expect that may make a dent in your budget. Many cancer centers and advocacy groups offer financial support, but budgeting and working with your healthcare team to put together a list of expenses will help you be better prepared and on top of things financially.

- Make sure to talk with your patient navigator about potential treatment expenses.
- Make sure to talk with your patient navigator about resources.
- Take the time to work with a member of your family on your budget - to include treatment-related expenses.
- See if you can identify someone to help you manage, negotiate and pay bills while you're in treatment.

Here's one way to look at your plan for economic empowerment. The 3 A's of Economic Empowerment are: Assess, Address and Adapt. How can you work on the 3 A's in your daily life? Write below.

Assess	_____
Address	_____
Adapt	_____





### Polycymaking

Being involved in policy is a powerful way to make long-lasting, systemic change. What are challenges you and or others have faced that you would like to change?

Make a list of issues you feel empowered to change.

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Describe what your advocacy stance might be on certain topics to create change in your community or nationally?

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### Psychological

Mindset is an important part of your journey. Take out "all begins with you." The balance of mind, body, and soul that can stabilize us in a world that has many twists and turns. We each have unique life experiences that we bring to our cancer journey, which means that it's important to have a personalized plan for support.



How do I enhance my mental health?

List resources and support that can help you on your journey. For example, friends, families, medical professionals and support groups.



## Circle of Care



## The Circle of Care Peer to Peer Support

Cancer is shocking and life-changing, and emotional. It comes with many unique challenges and obstacles.

There are many "firsts". These "firsts" may include: your initial diagnosis, learning and understanding treatment options, meeting your medical team, identifying a support system, developing a plan for each day.

Sometimes, taking inventory of what "we have" and "what we need" helps us propel forward one small step at a time. Set aside a moment to take inventory.

I have the following:

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I need the following:

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### Mentorship

Having a mentor, someone who has first-hand experience, can help you navigate the challenging medical system and your new normal. It's like having an angel in your pocket. They are always there when you need them and are invested in helping you to live your best life. A mentor can become the friend, confidant and support we never knew we needed.

Have you ever had a mentor? If not, would you consider search for a mentor? Write down the desired characteristics you are looking for in a mentor. Write down what you are looking for in a mentor and let's start the process of finding your pocket angel.

### Sharing Your Story

Stories are not "one-size-fits-all." There are endless ways that you can use your experience and journey to help someone else. Sharing your story with a family member or a neighbor can be life-changing. Your story can be the reason someone that you care about gets tested. Storytelling is one of the earliest forms of communication and can be one of the most comforting, encouraging, and educational ways we can support each other. Through the process of storytelling, we can heal ourselves as well.

In what spaces do you feel comfortable sharing your story? Brainstorm what you might need in order to share your story later.



### Each One, Reach One

The "halo affect" is when the act of helping someone else is so rewarding that you feel like you are also being helped by this act.

List some ways you can help others. Brainstorm ideas on ways to support and be supported.





## Release the Fear

Being educated, having a support network, learning from mentors, and helping others are all tools in your empowerment belt. These tools can assist you in processing and managing the fears that cancer creates in your lives.

Name techniques that help people manage their fears.

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Name techniques you use to manage stress and fear. Write them all down and keep them as references.  
When we are in a moment of fear, it is difficult to remember what we have learned.

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## Tiger Tip

Tigerlily Foundation BREATHE Tv: Season 2, Episode 3, discusses fear of cancer and fear of recurrence. This episode is a great resource to support self-awareness and empowerment.

### Peace and Healing

We all want to live our best lives. We want the people we know and love to live their best lives as well! Our mind-body connection begins with the mindset we have when we close our eyes at night, and again when we open our eyes first thing in the morning. Our mind-body connection fills the space in our hearts and is created by the intentions we set.

What brings you peace?

Share a mentor or peer-to-peer support that has aided you in your healthcare journey. List ways this relationship supported you.

If this is not something you have explored yet, that's okay! Maybe it's time to try something new. Instead, list peer-to-peer support or mentorship opportunities you can research in the box above. Tigerlily ANGEL Advocate program is one place to begin. We can support you in finding the right fit. Tigerlily ANGEL Advocate program is one place to begin. We can support you in finding the right fit.



## Empowerment Through the Affirmations

**A cancer diagnosis can initially feel disempowering. However, we have the power within to find empowerment from our life experiences. It is important to also focus on the moment at hand. Based on the stage of your cancer, taking it one step at a time is the best that you can do, and that's okay. Learning how to be in the present can be transformative.**

People can't always be positive and it's not a reflection of them being empowered. Redirecting energy to the positive and collaborating with your support system, caregivers, and medical team is a part of empowerment! Here are a couple of examples of shifting the conversation.

**What I am thinking: Chemo is toxic and will wreak havoc on my body**

**Adding Empowerment = How is the chemotherapy helping to get rid of cancer cells in my body?**

**What I am thinking: I feel terrible.**

**Adding Empowerment = I don't feel so well right now, but I'm focusing on healing and wellness.**

Write down affirmations. Read them out loud and listen to how the statements sound to you. Have these conversations with your support system, caregivers, and medical team and be empowered!

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Holistic medicine is the art & science of healing that addresses the whole person - body, mind & spirit

## Holistic Health and Me

Lesson 4 features Sue Weldon from Unite for HER. Sue praises integrative therapies that complimented her medical treatment as key in her survivorship. Therapies such as nutrition, acupuncture, massage, yoga, and counseling can improve your holistic health and wellness. If you are looking to incorporate holistic health into your breast cancer journey, Unite for HER has some great resources. You can find them at [www.uniteforher.org](http://www.uniteforher.org).

## Integrative Therapies That Support Self-Awareness and Empowerment

### Food

It is not as simple as: “Let food be thy medicine, and let medicine be thy food.” However, this famous quote from Hippocrates has some truth. Food is how we nourish every cell in our body. It directly impacts how we feel, how replenish nutrition, and how we fuel our bodies.







### Acupuncture

Acupuncture points are believed to stimulate the central nervous system. This, in turn, releases chemicals into the muscles, spinal cord, and brain. These biochemical changes may stimulate the body's natural healing abilities and promote physical and emotional well-being.

Johns Hopkins Medicine

### Yoga

The U.S. military, the National Institutes of Health and other large organizations are listening to — and incorporating — scientific validation of yoga's value in health care.

Numerous studies show yoga's benefits in arthritis, osteopenia, balance issues, oncology, women's health, chronic pain and other specialties.

Johns Hopkins Medicine





### Massage

According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, massage is found to be helpful both physically and emotionally. It soothes sore muscles and releases tension in the body and mind.

Massage therapy has been found to be helpful in the treatment of:

- Back pain
- Anxiety
- High blood pressure
- Migraine headache
- Carpal tunnel symptoms
- Side effects of cancer and cancer therapy

### Counseling

*Counseling*, as defined by Merriam Webster, is the advice and support that is given to people to help them deal with problems, make important decisions, etc. We can all use counseling from time-time in our lives.

The trick is finding a counselor who is a good fit for you so that you can build a counselor-patient relationship and make progress.

Are you exploring any integrative therapies? List them.





## Tiger Tips

Sometimes people look at breast cancer as a part of their life - a disease that requires life-long treatments and monitoring without an end date. Others look at breast cancer as a journey.

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Each experience is unique. Sometimes part of our journey or your story is that we're experiencing a low point.

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Remember that this is ok. Pause. Breathe. Breathe again. Repeat.

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Technology is a great source of empowerment! It can make us feel empowered in our health by providing diversity and accessibility to medical professionals.

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Your patient story can also be empowerment! There is value in your experiences. Your voice can help educate and create best practices for the next generation of providers.

