My name is Susan Kapilik and I work at CancerCare Manitoba, Breast Cancer Centre of Hope (BCCH). We are part of a department called Patient and Family Support Services. Our role is to provide support to you and your family and friends all along your journey with breast cancer.
At BCCH we know that each person experiencing breast cancer is unique. So we offer information and support in a variety of forms. We want to work with you to find what will best fit with your situation and needs.

So far you have likely been very focused on the changes that breast cancer is causing to your body. But you may find that there are other changes happening for you at the same time or you may come across some of these at various parts of the journey. We want you to know that there are things that can be helpful to manage these other changes as well.

A diagnosis of cancer takes you out of your ordinary life. There is a loss of predictability, routine and control. There are some very practical needs that result from geographical changes: if need to travel for surgery or treatment. There maybe some economic changes: if you need to be off work for a while. Some people report experiencing social changes: change in friendships; change in role within the family as well as spiritual changes: or a shift in faith.

So let’s talk about some of the programs that many people have found helpful.
Peer Support is a focused relationship with someone you can talk to about what it is like to live through and beyond a breast cancer diagnosis.

Peer support volunteers are specially trained to provide a listening ear and to encourage you on your journey. They provide one-on-one contact, usually by phone. Peer support is voluntary, confidential and free.

Matches are based on what you feel are your needs and priorities and often include age, diagnosis, type of surgery and treatment, lifestyle and any other special concerns.

The closer the match, the better the contact, so we attempt to match you with someone as much like you as we can. To be matched with a peer support volunteer simply call Hope.

A Peer Supporter can share what it was like for her. She may be able to answer questions like:
How did you tell your kids?
What was it like the first time you looked at your incision?
How did your family react?
At hope you will also find a resource centre that has an extensive lending library of books, DVDs, as well as a wide variety of pamphlets and links to programs and websites. We have resources on every aspect of the breast cancer experience including surgery, diagnosis, treatments, nutrition, complementary therapies, social and emotional aspects. There are things that are helpful to partners, children, and those interested in providing support to someone affected by breast cancer.
Our newsletter is a good way to stay informed about upcoming events, what is new in research and treatment. Women tell us that reading the stories of other people on the journey brings them comfort and reminds them that they are not alone. Our Voice is available on our website or can be mailed to your home. Give us a call to be added to the list to receive it.
www.cancercare.mb.ca\hope

204-788-8080

Toll-free in Manitoba

1-888-660-4866
You will receive excellent nursing care all along the journey. Sometimes it is hard to know which nurse to ask about a particular issue or you need some extra time to better understand your situation. That is where our navigator can help.

She has extensive nursing experience in breast cancer, and keeps up to date on the latest in treatment and research.

You can talk to her over the phone or meet with her at our office. You are welcome to bring anyone you would like to include to the meeting. It is a good opportunity to make sure that you have answers to all your questions. She can ensure that you know your options and are making your decisions on balanced information.
Breast Cancer Centre of Hope
Breast Cancer Navigator
204-788-8014
Toll-free in Manitoba
1-888-660-4866
Our navigator also coordinates education sessions that you can attend in person or via MB Telehealth. These include a pre-op session for people considering immediate or delayed breast reconstruction and Moving Forward After Breast Cancer to help people transition back to life after treatment is complet.
If you are having a mastectomy without reconstruction, you will want to know about the breast prosthesis program. You are entitled to a free prosthesis and bra with no out of pocket expense to you. There are just a few things you will need to know about accessing the program so we can help to make sure you get what you are looking for.
Breast Cancer Centre of Hope is the perfect place to call if you are looking for a group or activity. We do our best to stay informed about what is available to people with breast cancer. We can provide you with the contact information for various activity groups and fitness programs.

We can also help you link to counsellors, social workers and support groups to help you cope with the emotional impact of cancer.
Feeling a certain level of distress regarding cancer is normal. We know that approximately 30% of people with cancer will experience anxiety or depression. Sometimes experiencing these feelings is what we need to become proactive about getting support.

If at any time on your journey you are feeling overwhelmed it is important to get help. You can talk to someone at Patient & Family Support Services at CancerCare Manitoba or within your local community.
I strongly encourage you to come down to the Centre. If you would like to meet with our navigator it is best to make an appointment before you come but you don’t need an appointment to check out our library and other resources.
Here is some advice that women who have completed their breast cancer journey wanted you to know.

It is important to accept help, but only when what is being offered will truly be helpful. Allowing the people around you to help makes them feel better as well. You may want to write a list of things you could use like a casserole for the freezer or a drive to an appointment or someone taking your kids to a practice. This way you are able to suggest a task at the time the offer is being made.

The needs of your family and friends may need to come second for now, because in the long run you will not be of help to them if you are not well. So be kind to yourself.

Remember that lots of people will offer you their opinions of how you should feel and what you should do, but allow your self permission to do what is right for you.

Please remember that there are lots of people that are eager to help with the emotional and practical things that may make this time easier.