



# SHARSHERET®

The Jewish Breast & Ovarian Cancer Community

**Cancer Support for Single Women:  
A Discussion with Sari Ticker, PsyD and Sharsheret Peer Supporters  
Webinar Follow Up  
8/24/2020**

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The following information is provided by Sari Ticker, PsyD as follow up to questions received during the webinar. Please note that she answered all questions to the best of her ability and if a question was omitted, please contact Sharsheret to discuss your question with our team of social workers.

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**Sari Ticker, PsyD Email:** [sticker@illnessnavigation.com](mailto:sticker@illnessnavigation.com)

**Book Recommendation:**

[How to Be a Friend to a Friend Who's Sick](#) by Letty Cottin Pogrebin ; Letty will be speaking on Sharsheret's national book club webinar on November 17<sup>th</sup>, so save the date!

**Remaining Questions:**

People often say they don't know how to help so I give them suggestions, like can you drop off dinner; they sometimes say they can't and then don't offer something else. How can I reach out to friends to ask for help in general and also communicate, in a way they will understand, that anything they can do will be helpful?

It can be helpful to let a loved one know 2-4 different things that you need help with. This gives them an opportunity to pick something, while also being helpful for you. Naturally, over time you will recognize that different friends/family are helpful in different ways (someone is best to call for help with rides, someone else is best to talk about feelings, someone else is great to go on walks with, etc.)

What's the best way to come up with a list of ways different people can help different ways, i.e. emotional support, financial support and physical assistance?

The distress thermometer can help to figure out what your needs are. Also, see above.

What goals and objectives should we have to successfully navigate through survivorship?

**Be patient with yourself**

- Focus on each day and acknowledge there will be good ones and hard ones (maybe even in the same day)
- Do things at your own pace to start new activities or make decisions
- Give yourself permission to heal
- Give yourself permission to grieve
- Prepare yourself for mixed reactions

### Find ways to feel empowered

- Be informed, talk to your doctor and create survivorship plan
- Find ways to help yourself relax
- Be as active as you comfortably can
- Look at what you can control

How do you possibly begin to date after a double mastectomy? Do you tell the partner in advance - oh by the way I have fake breasts? I have breast cancer? Do you mention it in an online dating profile?

There is no right way to do this! It is important to feel comfortable with who and when. It is helpful to practice and plan what you want to say, pick a time and place where you will not be rushed. Remember, you do not need to answer any questions that you don't want to answer.

What can single cancer patients and survivors do to make themselves (and others) more comfortable as they meet new single people who may or may not be cancer patients or survivors themselves?

It is not your job to make others more comfortable! You have to do what is right for you. Trust your intuition and do what feels right, reflect often.

Finding strength and confidence as a single mother with breast cancer? I'm a newly single mother with three tween/teenage daughters and was recently diagnosed with breast cancer. We are a team but how do I age-appropriately include them, encourage/empower them, and help calm their fears?

Developmentally, it would be helpful to make sure they have supports outside of the home, i.e. friends. Recognize they may not come to you to talk about feelings, so keep communication channels open. Update them on diagnosis as feels necessary. Answer their questions honestly, do not make any promises that you cannot keep.

Great book for teenagers: [My Parent Has Cancer and it Really Sucks!](#) By Marc and Maya Silver.

Please click this [link](#) to view the full recording of the webinar.

