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Enlighten Me: Peer mentor support for breast cancer patients in Delaware

Dr. Alinsilva



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The Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition's peer mentorship program supports those who've been diagnosed with breast cancer.

One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime and although fewer than one percent of men are diagnosed with the disease, their odds of survival are

worse.

To help with the stressors, anxieties, and uncertainty that come with having breast cancer, the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition offers a peer mentorship program with free one-on-one support to those who've been diagnosed.

Delaware Public Media's Abigail Lee sits down this week with Connie Holdridge – the Survivorship Director for the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition – to learn more about the mentorship program during this Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

DPM's Abigail Lee talks with Survivorship Director Connie Holdridge about DBCC's mentorship program

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The Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition offers a peer mentor support program to those with a recent diagnosis.

The program pairs a breast cancer survivor – whether they are metastatic or cancer-free – with someone recently diagnosed.

DBCC's survivorship director Connie Holdridge has been diagnosed three times herself.

She said it's a scary experience where people feel they can't turn to spouses or family because they're hurting just as much as the person with the diagnosis.

"I'm just trying to give them someone to talk to – they can help," Holdridge said. "We have support groups, and we have activities, and we have ways to calm yourself and ways to relieve anxiety."

Mentors go through a training led by a DBCC presentation and are taught their role is primarily to listen, not speak.

“I think it's a very necessary part of anybody's journey is to have somebody that they can bounce ideas off of, somebody that can say, ‘Yes, I went to radiation and I'm okay,’ or ‘Yes, I did chemo and my hair did grow back.’ You don't know what you don't know, and that's hard.”

Holdridge said most people are comfortable with others that are of like mind and often request mentors who are similar to them.

She added the program's purpose is to try and calm people down, and bringing them a mentor they can relate to is a good start.

More information on DBCC and its peer mentor support program can be found at their [website](#).

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Abigail Lee

With degrees in journalism and women’s and gender studies, Abigail Lee aims for her work to be informed and inspired by both.

She is especially interested in rural journalism and social justice stories, which came from her time with NPR-affiliate KBIA at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Mo.

She speaks English and Russian fluently, some French, and very little Spanish (for now!)

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