



Diagnosis

Emotional Impact

Treatment/Side Effects

Survivorship

Patient Stories

Short Form vs. Long Form

A previous Cancer Journeys column (3/23/23) spoke about the kind of cancer patient counseling that is referred to as "short-form," because it usually lasts 15 minutes or less and occurs within the facility where a patient is being treated for their illness.

At the Fighting Chance Clinic in Sag Harbor, most of our counseling sessions -- which are always FREE -- are "long-form" lasting 45 minutes and they usually take place once a week for a month or more.

Our Clinic has a quiet, peaceful atmosphere, and our furnishings are akin to a cozy living room. Counselors use their private office to meet with patients, so there are no disturbances.

Our main referral sources are oncologists based in Suffolk County who understand that some of their patients need to delve deeply into troublesome aspects of their cancer journey in order to stabilize their emotional well-being.

Additional patient referrals come to us by way of local clergy, and from the Phillips Family Cancer Center in Southampton, when it determines that patients may benefit from counseling, over and above the short-form therapy practiced there.

Cancer Patient Counseling Clinics Are in Short Supply

We believe Fighting Chance to be the only full-fledged nonprofit cancer counseling clinic in this country. This is mostly because of the complex package that a founder has to assemble.

Services are free, so funding is needed for all expenses, including staff salaries.

The core staff is oncology social workers who are hard to find. Plus, they must be licensed, insured and have 20+ years of experience.

So that doctors have confidence in our operation, the Clinic operates at a very high level of professionalism. This is evidenced by our accreditation by the Joint Commission.

Oncology Social Workers Are in Short Supply

Q How many licensed social workers are there in the U.S.?

A. 350,000

Q Of that group, how many are qualified as oncology social workers?

A. 1,300

In other words, oncology social workers make up about half of 1% of all licensed social workers today. And Fighting Chance employs 3 of them.



Sanctuary. Our Group Counseling Room is often described by patients as a "safe place" where they can discuss anything about their cancer journey.

Intersection of Oncology and Mental Health

For decades, oncologists saw little benefit in a "holistic" approach to cancer care that included attention to a patient's emotional well-being.

At Fighting Chance, however, we felt an intersection of these two disciplines was necessary and inevitable. So that is the "X Spot" where we have placed our focus, since our founding, 20 years ago.

Fighting Chance has become the #1 referral choice for local oncologists who now understand that a physician must, in fact, treat a patient's trauma, and not just the tumor.

FREE EVENT

Join Fighting Chance
at Cormaria, Sag Harbor
Sat, April 15, 8:30am - 12noon to
hear and discuss how "Spirituality"
can help on the cancer journey.

For more info, visit:
fightingchance.org/events
or call 631-725-4646