

BALANCING  
**WORK & CANCER**  
WEBINARS

Body Confidence, Self-  
Confidence in the Workplace

December 13, 2017

# CEU REQUIREMENTS

If you plan on requesting continuing education credits, you **MUST** complete all of the following steps:

1. You must have registered online for today's session
2. Dial-in to the audio portion of the webinar  
*Please note that participants who "listen-in" on another participant's line will NOT be eligible for credit.*
3. Within **2 WEEKS** of this session:
  - ✓ Complete the evaluation\*
  - ✓ Complete the post-test & earn a passing grade\*

**\*An email with links to the evaluation and post-test will be sent Thursday afternoon (12/14/17) by 5:00 PM ET.**

**\*\*Certificates will be emailed within 4-6 weeks\*\***

# SPEAKER

Sage Bolte, PhD, LCSW, OSW-C, CST

Executive Director, Life with Cancer and  
Patient Experience

Inova Schar Cancer Institute

*This presentation is intended to provide general information on the topics presented. It is provided with the understanding that the authors and presenters are not engaged in rendering any legal, medical, or professional services by its publication or distribution. Although this content was reviewed by a professional, it should not be used as a substitute for professional services. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed in whole or part with out express written permission.*

© Copyright 2017 Sage Bolte, Phd, LCSW, OSW-C, CST

# KEY TOPICS

1. How body image may be impacted by cancer and the effect of body changes at work
2. Common body image challenges
3. Understanding negative body image due to cancer treatment
4. Techniques to maintain and/or increase self-confidence while working or when returning to work

dear body,

**Please heal.**

**I don't know how much more of this I can take.**

**I know I need to be patient. But please.**

love, me

[ambasaman.blogspot.com](http://ambasaman.blogspot.com)

# WHY TALK ABOUT BODY IMAGE?

- 31% – 67% of survivors struggle with body image changes.
- Body image evaluation and body image investment.
  - **Body image evaluation** refers to the degree to which one is **satisfied** with his or her appearance, and whether there is a discrepancy between self-perceived physical characteristics and desired characteristics.
  - **Body image investment** refers to the **value or importance** one places on appearance and physical attributes.Both of these attitudes are routinely assessed in the body image literature.
- Many survivors minimize body image difficulties due to shame, embarrassment or guilt.
- Body image concerns are a normal, human experience.

# SELF-ESTEEM & BODY IMAGE

- **Self-esteem** refers to how you think about yourself. Self-confidence, self-respect, pride, independence and self-reliance. All the ways you think about yourself and your abilities. A negative self-esteem typically leads to lower self-confidence, underachievement, insecurity, anxiety, depression, acting out behaviors, sleep problems and isolation.
- **Body image** is a part of your self-esteem. What you think about and how you view your body — both positively and negatively. A **negative body image typically has a negative effect on one's self-esteem**, dating relationships, sexual relationships and sexual function.

# COMMON BODY IMAGE CHALLENGES

- Masculinity and Femininity can be challenged
- Hair loss, regrowth
- Weight gain, weight loss
- Changes in skin
- Disfigurement
  - Visible
  - Hidden
- To disclose or not disclose?
- Others?

# UNDERSTANDING NEGATIVE BODY IMAGE

- Unrealistic expectations about treatment outcomes for appearance and functioning
- Preoccupied with concerns about upcoming appearance changes
- Difficulties making treatment decisions due to concerns about appearance/body changes
- Difficulties with or avoidance of viewing oneself after treatment
- Highly dissatisfied with appearance outcome following treatment
- Preoccupied with perceived or actual physical flaws resulting from cancer and/or its treatment

# UNDERSTANDING NEGATIVE BODY IMAGE

- Avoiding social situations due to appearance/body changes
- Romantic relationship stress due to body image changes
- Considerable time and effort spent fixing/adjusting appearance
- Constant anxiety, depression or other negative feelings due to body image changes
- **All** correlated with dysfunctional thoughts, maladaptive behaviors, and/or negative emotions

# IMPACT ON THE WORKPLACE

- To disclose or not disclose?
- Can challenge “work/life” balance and boundaries
- Anxious about appearance changes and questions
- Anxiety or insecurities can contribute to lower performance, withdrawal, etc.
- If living with advanced disease, additional complex challenges

# IMPACT ON THE WORKPLACE

- Personal insecurities and relationship challenges or changes may penetrate the workplace
- May avoid relationships
- Coworkers may alter interactions

SO, WHAT DO I DO???

# GET COMFORTABLE WITH YOUR STORY

- Understand your diagnosis, consequences of treatment and any risks for future.
- Identify the areas of grief that you may need to work on.
- Role play with a friend to get comfortable telling your story — what are the barriers? Can you disclose in different ways with coworkers?
- There is no right or wrong amount of time to tell or not to tell — is there a way to slowly disclose or tell all at once?
- Put yourself in the other person's shoes: How would you react? What would you want to know and not know initially?

# EVALUATE TOXIC THOUGHTS AND TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS

- Negative thoughts lead to negative feelings and negative behaviors.
- If we can identify that first negative thought, we have the opportunity to create a positive change.

# CHALLENGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

Ask yourself:

- What things do I have control of? How I think and feel about myself — the first step.
- What is it that you don't feel is attractive? Is there a way to minimize this and maximize other qualities?
- Where can I excel at work? What can I feel positive about at work?

# CREATE POSITIVE RESPONSES

- Identify negative thoughts.
  - “I will never look the same.”
- Offer a counter thought.
  - “I may never look the same, but I can make choices for myself right now that help me feel better.”
- Choose a positive behavior.
  - Exercise, take a walk, give yourself an extra 10 minutes to get ready or rest...

# EVALUATE TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS

- Take control — choose wisely:
  - Get rid of any toxic relationships. These are not helpful to your physical or emotional health.
  - Surround yourself with individuals who you are able to be honest with and who provide you the support you need.
  - Use HR for support if these are in the workplace.
- **Ask**, if your needs are not being met:
  - e.g., “It’s not helpful when you say to me, ‘Everything is going to be okay’ or ‘Everything happens for a reason.’ What I need is for you to listen or to tell me this frustrates you too.”

# BUILDING SELF & SEXUAL ESTEEM

- Find three things every morning that you like about yourself (mirror exercise).
- Practice Positive Affirmations.
  - “I accept my body; I will do everything I can to love and help it heal.”
  - “My body supports my healing process.”
- Take time to get to know your body.
  - Touch your scars in the bath.
  - Find out what does and doesn't feel good.
- Learn to laugh at some of the changes. Humor is healing and attractive.
- Surround yourself with positive, supportive people.
- Make a list of your past successful relationships — probably not based solely off of how you look.

# CONNECTING WITH YOURSELF

- Support your new limitations and your new abilities, give permission for them to be fluid and changing.
  - Communicate this to your team.
- Start with self-pleasuring exercises to get to know your body and what makes you feel good.
- Choose one or two friends (or coworkers) who you know you can be honest with and share concerns, etc.
- Take time out (playing golf, going for a run, pedicure, meditate...) and reconnect with yourself.
- Connect to a support group to discuss common concerns.
- Make an appointment with your oncologist to follow up on some of the long-term concerns you have.
- If you find you don't want to be around people, consider being evaluated for depression.

# TECHNIQUES FOR STRENGTHENING SELF AND BODY ESTEEM

# REALITY CHECK

- Is this message really true?
- Would a person say this to another person? If not, why am I saying it to myself?
- What do I get out of thinking this thought? If it makes me feel badly about myself, why not stop thinking it?
  - You could also ask someone else — someone who likes you and who you trust — if you should believe this thought about yourself. Often, just looking at a thought or situation in a new light helps.

# BECOMING MORE AWARE

- Creative Expression
  - Journaling
  - Meditation/Prayer
  - Exercise, dance, walk, box
  - Learn to identify and beat your negative thought to create a more positive response.

# CHANGING OUR THOUGHTS

- Use positive words like *happy, peaceful, loving, enthusiastic, warm*.
- Avoid using negative words such as *worried, frightened, upset, tired, bored, not, never, can't*.
- Don't make a statement like *"I am not going to worry anymore."* Instead, say, *"I focus on the positive"* or whatever feels right to you. Substitute *"It would be nice if"* for *"should."*
- Always use the present tense — e.g., *"I am healthy," "I am well," "I am happy," "I have a good job,"* as if the condition already exists.
- Use *I, me, or your own name*.
  - Envision yourself already in that healthy place: Your realistic ideal physical and emotional space

# COUNTER THE NEGATIVITY

Negative Thought	Positive Thought
I am not worth anything.	I am a valuable person.
I have never accomplished anything.	I have accomplished many things.
I always make mistakes.	I do many things well.
I am a jerk.	I am a great person.
I don't deserve a good life.	I deserve to be happy and healthy.
I am stupid.	I am smart.

# YOUR "GO TO" LIST

- At least **five of your strengths** — for example, honesty, persistence, courage, friendliness, creativity
- At least **five things you admire** about yourself — for example the way you have raised your children, your work ethic, your good relationship with your brother or your spiritual life
- The five **greatest** achievements in your life so far, like recovering from a serious illness, learning another language, graduating from high school or learning to use a computer
- At least **20 accomplishments** — they can be as simple as learning to tie your shoes to getting an advanced college degree

# YOUR "GO TO" LIST

- At least 5 ways you can "treat" or reward yourself that don't include food and that don't cost anything, such as sleeping in an extra 15 minutes, walking in woods, taking a bath, looking at something beautiful or something that you enjoy, watching a movie that makes you laugh, or chatting with a friend
- 5 things that can make you laugh
- 5 things you could do to help someone else .
- 5 things that you do that make you feel good about yourself (dressing nice just because, praying, listening to music, etc.)

# BE YOUR OWN POSITIVE VOICE

- Set a timer for 10 minutes or note the time on your watch or a clock. Write your name across the top of the paper. Then write everything positive and good you can think of about yourself. Include special attributes, talents and achievements.
  - This is only for you, no judgment, no one else is reading it.
  - Fold it and keep it in a safe place to read over and over again.

# RESEARCH SAYS...

- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Interventions
- **Therapeutic approach** that targets dysfunctional cognitions, emotions, and behavior by alteration of cognitions
- Components included psycho-education, stress management, problem-solving, cognitive reframing and communication skills training
- Other Psychological Interventions
- Psychosexual therapy focusing on communication training, sensate focus, and body image exposure
- **Expressive-supportive therapy** focusing on expression of thoughts and emotions, receiving and offering support, coping skills
- Education Interventions
- Information disseminated in lecture formats to increase knowledge on disease and treatment with the aim of increasing self-efficacy
- **Cosmesis-focused Interventions**; Education on using cosmetics to improve appearance
- Provision of beauty treatment regimens (mani- and pedicure, hairdressing, make-up)
- Sensate-focused/Physical-fitness Interventions
- Massage therapy with the aim of stress reduction
- Hatha yoga focusing on changing patient's perceptions about and physical constraints imposed on their body
- **Strength training and physical exercise** to regain physical fitness

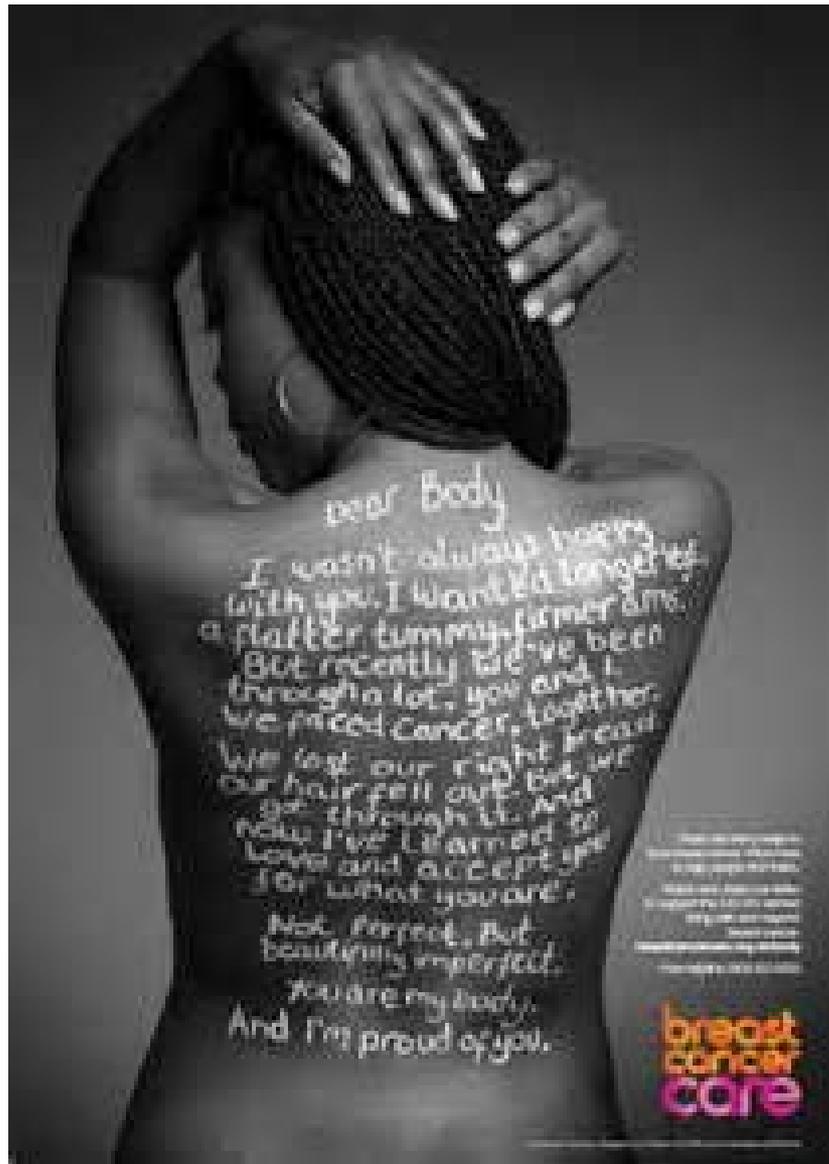
Taken from... Fingeret et al. Cancer. 2014 Mar 1; 120(5): 633-641. Published online 2013 Nov 21. doi: 10.1002/cncr.28469

# SUMMARY

- Cognitive behavioral therapy and exercise have been shown to be the two most effective interventions
- You are in charge of yourself — your thoughts, your environment and your body
- Be patient with the changes and explore options for improvement
- Seek out help from a professional to help work through the road blocks
- Allow time to adjust. It takes time to adapt so treat yourself with compassion and kindness

# SUMMARY

- Talk with others who have been in similar situations and can support positive thinking
- As much as possible, remain active. Physical activity creates energy and may help you feel better during treatment. Social activities can also help you focus on something other than cancer
- Are there medical or non-medical interventions?
- Identify your goals and your struggles with your healthcare team
- Seek counseling for ongoing support



# RESOURCES

- American Cancer Society's Look Good Feel Better
- *Woman, Cancer, Sex*, by Anne Katz
- *Man, Cancer, Sex*, by Anne Katz
- *Being Single with Cancer*, Tracy Maxwell
- Others?

# CONTACT INFORMATION

Website

[www.lifewithcancer.org](http://www.lifewithcancer.org)  
[www.sagebolte.com](http://www.sagebolte.com)

Twitter

@boltes

Email

[Sage.Bolte@inova.org](mailto:Sage.Bolte@inova.org)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## 2018 Webinars

**Managing Finances** – Wednesday, January 10, 1 PM ET/10 AM PT

**Career Change** – Wednesday, February 14, 1 PM ET/10 AM PT

**Job Search** – Wednesday, March 14, 6 PM ET/10 AM PT

[www.cancerandcareers.org/en/community/events/webinars](http://www.cancerandcareers.org/en/community/events/webinars)

## 2018 Conferences

**MIDWEST CONFERENCE ON WORK & CANCER\***

Friday, March 23, 2018, Chicago

<http://www.cancerandcareers.org/en/community/events/westcoast-conference>

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WORK & CANCER\***

Friday, June 22, 2018, New York City

<https://www.cancerandcareers.org/en/community/events/conference>

**WEST COAST CONFERENCE ON WORK & CANCER\***

Fall, 2018, Los Angeles, CA

<https://www.cancerandcareers.org/en/community/events/westcoast-conference>

*\*Travel scholarships available*

### **Contact:**

Nicole Jarvis, LMSW, Senior Manager of Programs, Cancer and Careers

[njarvis@cew.org](mailto:njarvis@cew.org)

# MORE FROM CAC

Resume Review Service

[www.cancerandcareers.org/resume\\_reviews/new](http://www.cancerandcareers.org/resume_reviews/new)

Free Publications

[http://www.cancerandcareers.org/publication\\_orders/new](http://www.cancerandcareers.org/publication_orders/new)

Ask a Career Coach

<https://www.cancerandcareers.org/career-coach>

Collective Diary

<https://www.cancerandcareers.org/diary>

# CEU REQUIREMENTS

If you plan on requesting continuing education credits, you **MUST** complete all of the following steps:

1. You must have registered online for today's session
2. Dial-in to the audio portion of the webinar  
*Please note that participants who "listen-in" on another participant's line will NOT be eligible for credit.*
3. Within **2 WEEKS** of this session:
  - ✓ Complete the evaluation\*
  - ✓ Complete the post-test & earn a passing grade\*

**\*An email with links to the evaluation and post-test will be sent Thursday afternoon (12/14/17) by 5:00 PM ET.**

**\*\*Certificates will be emailed within 4-6 weeks\*\***