



Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter



Social Support & Its Impact on Your Health

September 2013, Issue 63

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**Be The Change You
Want to See -
VOTE!**



Why let other people decide what is best for you when you can have a voice? VOTE. You can help decide. You can vote. Even if you don't think you know enough, VOTE on what you do know. One of our favorite ideas, a click away, is to learn all about holding a **Ballot Party** - a fun, informative, and interesting way to engage yourself and others.

Check for registration and voting information on line or with your local government agency (just a click or phone call away) and let's have our voices heard!

A List to Get You Started and it's . . .

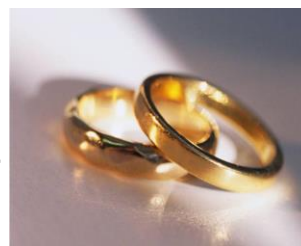
Medical Evidence & Reality

Hot off the press this week, courtesy of the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, is a study entitled, ***Marital Status and Survival in Patients With Cancer (Aizer et al)***. The research, which included more than one million patients, highlights **the potentially significant impact that social support can have on cancer detection, treatment, and survival.**



Though some researchers had expected such findings, others were surprised by the findings that found "unmarried patients are at significantly higher risk of presentation with metastatic cancer, undertreatment, and death resulting from their cancer."

In very clear terms, patients who are married are: 1) more likely to undergo surgical and/or radiotherapeutic management than unmarried patients, 2) are significantly less likely to die of their disease, and 3) are more likely to be treated than their unmarried counterparts.



The study found (pgs. 2-4) the survival benefit associated with marriage was larger than the published survival benefit of chemotherapy!



You can also see, hear and read *Married Cancer Patients are 20% More Likely to Beat the Disease*, which talks about these findings, and was featured earlier this week on NBC Evening News.

But all is not lost for those of us who are single, separated, divorced or widowed! The study's results raise a

strong probability that investments in targeted social support interventions could significantly improve the likelihood of improving outcomes among unmarried patients with cancer. **The researchers say (pg. 4), "the most effective way to combat the included risks associated with unmarried status in patients with cancer would be to aggressively promote support mechanisms."**





Readers and workshops attendees often say, "If you'd just **put a list together** of all the things I need to do and need to have, my life would be much easier, and part of my personal safety net would be much closer to complete."

Well, may be a list is just the thing to get you going. **So while we want you to read up and work on your skill base - learning to ask, learning to plan, and learning to use a group to accomplish goals and needs - here's a simple list to get you on your way.**



Print it out and use it on your way to being **better prepared for those unexpected challenges and changes that will surely come your way.**

And because this is a starter's list, **we're leaving up to you - our readers - to send us ideas of things that you think should be included to make this list more complete and useful to all our readers.**

Let's make this one big personal safety net goal!

Share Your Story



We're always seeking

In his **review of and comments on this research** entitled, **Marriage Is As Protective As Chemotherapy in Cancer Care**, Dr. David W. Kissane, of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and Weill Cornell Medical College, discusses the challenge of getting single, disconnected people to join support groups, especially after a diagnosis. Clinical depression often results from a cancer diagnosis.



Dr. Kissane recommends communication skills training as well as more and better support services on the part of oncologists, hospitals and public health agencies. But maybe **his best approach** (pg. 2) is to espouse ideas central to building a personal safety net: ". . . **we are tribal people, drawn into connection with one another to share what is most meaningful and fulfilling in life. Or medicine needs to follow a parallel paradigm: healing care that is both person - and family - centered in its expression.**" (We're also adding "community" centered to Dr. Kissane's thoughts.)

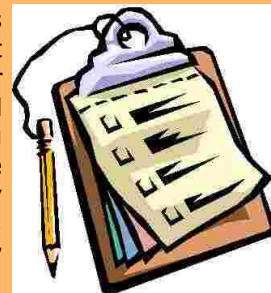


The public's mantra must be to help people get more and more connected, and to encourage and push both our medical facilities and providers to see the necessity of building strong personal communities - personal safety nets - as part of their philosophy and service - so all can have an equal, better and more

long-lasting life. *Let's all spread the word!*

What You've Told Us

This past June & July, we asked readers to help us by providing information about themselves and their familiarity with our work. Through a short survey, we wanted to know more about those who are trying to build a safety net and those who are trying to understand the use of a safety net. **From those who responded, here's just some of what we learned:**



* **48% said they use our "Wallet Card,"** while 42% want to have one to use. (Note: Send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope to our address at the bottom of the newsletter and I'll send you a handful!)

* **72% said they feel comfortable asking for assistance,** while 22% want to feel more comfortable. (Our readers are much more comfortable than the national average of 35% who feel comfortable).

* **64% have contact information for their neighbors** - the rest of us need to get busy!

* **61% have contact information for those in their personal safety net** - and, we hope - have asked those people

Personal Safety Net stories - how YOU have dealt with a situation by building a network, or gathering with others to solve problems; putting plans, people and resources together to make a task or journey easier. What has worked, or what has not -- either way, your experience can inform others, and we'll be grateful.

Tell us your story face-to-face by using your smart-phone and then uploading it to info@personalsafetynets.com or you can write out your story by clicking here.



Sharing is a wonderful thing and your story will certainly be a helpful learning tool to many others!

At Your Fingertips

If you're fairly new to the Personal Safety Nets® newsletter and interested in seeing "back editions" - it's simple.



Click here and you'll have access to our entire Newsletter Library - every edition we've produced. Even if you're just interested in one edition or topic, you can **click here** and find what you need. With your help - through letters and suggested topics - approximately ten times a year we pull together

to be in their safety net.

* **44% have their important papers & documents in a fireproof place or off site.** 47% want to, and like many of us, need to get those things out of our own homes and into places that are safe and accessible to those who will need them to help us in times of need and emergency.

* **26% (only) have shared their safety net details/information with those they want to have the info, or who need to know, or have the ability to help.** Yikes - many of us have a long way to go!

We also asked about **the ways Personal Safety Nets has affected your life**, and *with the hope that some of these comments may reflect your attitude, needs and feelings, we're sharing a few.*



"As a cancer survivor and caretaker, the subject of establishing a PSN was not presented to me gently. I had procrastinated but recent dealings has again put the reality of it in front of me."

"Your newsletters give me courage to talk with my partner about these topics. They also give me compassion for others who are hitting bottom."

"Mostly, I have been more open about asking for and giving help."

"I have no safety net, never have. Took a class and PSN has at least given me a vocabulary to talk about it."

"PSN helps me to think about my place in the scheme of things, e.g. what it takes to be part of a personal safety net and steps I can take to have that happen."

research, stories, tips,
answers to questions,
upcoming events, Cool Free
Downloads and more.

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