



Utilizing Wellness Retreats to Address the Psychosocial Needs of Young Patients Diagnosed with Breast Cancer



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Significance & Background

- 10% of patients diagnosed with breast cancer are under age 45
- Young patients face unique challenges during & after treatment
- Social isolation & lack of peer support decreases quality of life
- Some psychosocial concerns can't be resolved during a clinic visit

Purpose

- Create a safe, relaxing environment for young patients to gather
- Encourage community building & peer support
- Provide evidence-based, age-appropriate education & resources
- Foster self-care by providing whole-person wellness activities
- Improve feelings of loneliness by 25%
- Improve feeling supported by 20%

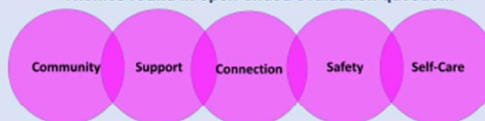
Interventions

- Pre-intervention needs assessment revealed patients < age 45 desire peer connection & treatment related education
- Five-hour wellness retreat was created in response to assessment
- Program content: keynote speaker, yoga, lunch, craft & resources
- Keynote speaker vetted for quality content & presentation style
- Young survivors throughout San Diego County invited to participate
- Nurse led program staffed by UCSD personnel & volunteers
- Online evaluation sought quantitative & qualitative feedback
- 53 participants completed the post-retreat evaluation

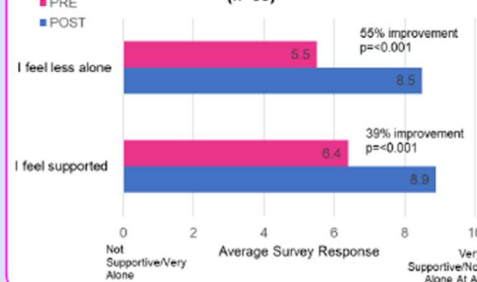
Results



Themes found in open-ended evaluation question:



Perception of Participants Pre/Post Retreat (n=53)



Discussion

- Wellness retreats effectively address psychosocial needs of patients
- Off-site, non-clinical venue creates a safe, nurturing environment
- Incorporating non-structured time is key to building community
- Dedication of nurses is central to program development & success
- Patients enjoy non-medical interactions with healthcare providers
- Increased multi-disciplinary staff participation could enhance program
- Future events will incorporate feedback from retreat evaluations
- Wellness retreats are an innovative contribution to patient care



References

- Office of the Surgeon General. (2023). Our Epidemic of Loneliness & Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection & Community. US Department of Health & Human Services
- Van de Ven P. (2020). The Journey of Sensemaking & Identity Construction In the Aftermath of Trauma: Peer support as a vehicle for connection. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 48(6), 1825-1839