

Becky's corner: Seasons of survival

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In 1985, a physician diagnosed with cancer, described the cancer experience as “Seasons of Survival.” The “seasons” are comprised of three main stages: First, the experience surrounding the initial diagnosis. Second, “extended survival” when the patient was dealing with the uncertainty of treatments and prognosis. Finally, the third season represented “permanent survival” when the person was considered cured or cancer-free. It ended there.

It also left many patients wondering, “OK. What next?”

Discussions about survivorship have been lively and ongoing and will continue to be so. During each season, however we define it, they must include continued discussion, research and follow-up.

The work involved with survivorship should really never end. It should only get better just like a fine wine. Survivorship should also be full of hope and celebration.

Cancer patients go through so much and from the time of diagnosis, treatment and follow-up, the care can encompass the better part of a year.

Completing treatment and moving to the survivorship phase, should be celebrated. In this time of COVID-19, celebrations have taken on a more restrained tone - but, nonetheless, are celebrations.

Survivorship means a *new normal*. Life will be different after a cancer diagnosis, but it is still life in the finest form with new insights and new strength.

Survive. Celebrate and support others. Support not only other patients, but help health care professionals to serve you better. Speak up and be proactive about your needs and insights.

Together, we are stronger.