

# NEWS FROM S·P·O·H·N·C



VOL. 31 NO. 4

SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH ORAL AND HEAD AND NECK CANCER, INC.

DECEMBER 2021



**S·P·O·H·N·C**  
A PROGRAM OF SUPPORT  
FOR  
PEOPLE WITH  
ORAL AND  
HEAD AND NECK CANCER

## Don't Underestimate the Power of Support Because "Together WE Heal"

Since the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic, the landscape of EVERYTHING has changed. From the way we shop, to the way we socialize, to the way our kids go to school, and even for many, the way we go to work, so much is different. The way in which we support each other has taken a turn as well.

At no time in our lives has the concept of support meant more though, to everyone, but especially to cancer patients and survivors and their loved ones. Newly diagnosed patients have faced uncertainty about when their treatments could begin, and survivors who regularly went for routine scans and checkups had to second guess and change their plans, doing their best to work within the guidelines of telemedicine for follow up care. The challenges have been endless, and yet, as we do, everyone has given it their all, to get through this very difficult time.

One of the most important aspects of cancer care is **support**, and the last year and a half has truly been a banner year for that. We see words like "**together**," more often than not, and it seems that although people were more separated, they found ways to come together and support one another -- any way they could. SPOHNC has been supporting newly diagnosed patients, survivors and their loved ones for more than 31 years. SPOHNC's Founder, Nancy Leupold, had a vision, and we still carry her vision and mission with us today.

SPOHNC has been doing an extraordinary amount of

listening recently, from our patient callers, to those who email us seeking support and a listening ear, and even those who connected with SPOHNC through our survey, which you will find in this issue, SPOHNC is taking the time to "listen" and be present, and to hear what you need. We are grateful to be able to be here to support those who have been affected by the diagnosis and treatment of oral, head and neck cancer. We recently came upon the blog below, and it speaks very closely to what SPOHNC is all about. Supporting, listening and caring, because **Together We Heal...**

*Adapted from Living Compass – Scott Stoner, LMFT -  
<https://www.livingcompass.org/wwwow>*

### On Listening...

People have reached out to talk more the last weeks than usual. Many of the conversations I have had have concluded with some version of, "I didn't expect you to solve anything; I just needed someone to listen. Thank you for being there." I am always honored when someone trusts me enough to be vulnerable and share the challenges they are facing.

People are reaching out more because they are exhausted. The emotional, relational, and economic stressors are not like anything else we have ever faced. Part of what makes what we are all experiencing so difficult is the feeling of powerlessness we have to make things better. This is when listening becomes even more critical.

There are times when the goal of listening to someone talk about a challenge is to offer a possible solution. For example, if someone is struggling with using Zoom and asks if we can help, we listen until we have enough information to offer a helpful response. A different, deeper kind of listening is needed when we listen to problems that

cannot be solved. In this case, the gift, the intention of our listening is for the other person to feel genuinely cared for and heard.

The word compassion means "with suffering." To listen with compassion is to stand with a person in the midst of their struggle. It is to be present with them in a way that helps them to feel loved, honored, and respected. It is one of the greatest gifts we can give one another.

It has been pointed out that it is perhaps not a coincidence that the words *listen* and *silent* contain the same letters. To truly listen, we have to be comfortable with silence. We also have to be comfortable with silence or not speaking or responding too quickly so as to hijack the other person's story.

You don't need to merely take my word on the power of truly listening to another; you can experience it. Over the next day or two, I invite us all to make an effort to listen intently to the people with

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## Remember to make your year end gift to SPOHNC



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whom we interact. Practice the discipline and intention it takes to listen deeply to another person. As you listen to them, listen to truly understand what they are saying, experiencing, feeling, and thinking, and not merely to respond.

Ask clarifying questions that let the person know you really care about what they are experiencing. Be still within yourself and be fully present to what they are saying to you. Try this several times and note what happens.

And because reading is a form of listening, I would like to thank you for listening to what I have shared here. I hope it inspires you to listen more carefully and to be more fully present to the people in your life, especially those who are feeling frightened, overwhelmed, and alone right now.

~ Scott Stoner, LMFT

*Editors Note: Scott Stoner, LMFT, has been a licensed marriage and family therapist, and a pastoral counselor for thirty-five years, first in the Chicago area and then in Milwaukee, WI. His focus is working with individuals, couples, men, and families. He is the co-director, with his wife Holly Hughes Stoner, of the Samaritan Family Wellness Foundation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The foundation's focus is creating preventative wellness materials for adults, families, and teens. He is also the creator of the national Living Compass Spirituality and Wellness Initiative.*



In all that you do today,  
 may it be a blessing  
 to another.

*"I felt very alone until I found SPOHNC.  
 After my first meeting with SPOHNC,  
 I knew this is where I needed to be."*

~ Dave L.



## From the Desk of the Executive Director

*For all you do...Thank You!*

***“Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.” – Helen Keller***

As 2021 draws to a close, our hearts and appreciation go out to our incredible volunteers! You helped SPOHNC address the challenges posed by the pandemic and you continued to support patients and their families when overwhelmed with a cancer diagnosis. The compassion you show to the people we serve is an inspiration for us all. We know how stressful it can be for the people who find themselves in need of the services we provide, and your words and actions go a long way towards helping this community. Your commitment and kindness have not gone unnoticed.

Many of you hosted virtual support group meetings or picked up the phone when being matched with a patient to ease one's anxieties. Being isolated and alone

can be daunting when going through a journey unlike any before. You were there and we could not do what we do without your consistent voice and service. SPOHNC recognizes that we are successful because of the community that surrounds us. We enjoy the support of more than 300+ volunteers, who are the faces of SPOHNC in many communities.

Coming together to support one another is an experience that allows each of us to learn and gain strength. We make a great team. You are our success!

Each volunteer understands the importance of all the programs and resources SPOHNC offers. Your willingness to give freely of your time and talent is greatly appreciated. All your efforts are making a big difference in the head and neck cancer community.

Thank you for helping us to continue SPOHNC's mission, and our Founder, Nancy Leupold's legacy. As we celebrate more than 31 years together, every year brings more reasons for us to be proud and continue to grow with your help and support.

“Together WE Heal” and we, together, will continue to face the challenges endured by this community and embrace many more opportunities to support head and neck

cancer patients and their loved ones.

On behalf of SPOHNC's Board of Directors, our team at SPOHNC, and each member... Thank You! We appreciate your support of all our endeavors.

Your SPOHNC family wishes you a joyful holiday season. May you and your loved ones have a beautiful New Year filled with good health, happiness, and an abundance of memories and blessings to cherish.

With sincere appreciation and gratitude,



Mary Ann Caputo  
Executive Director

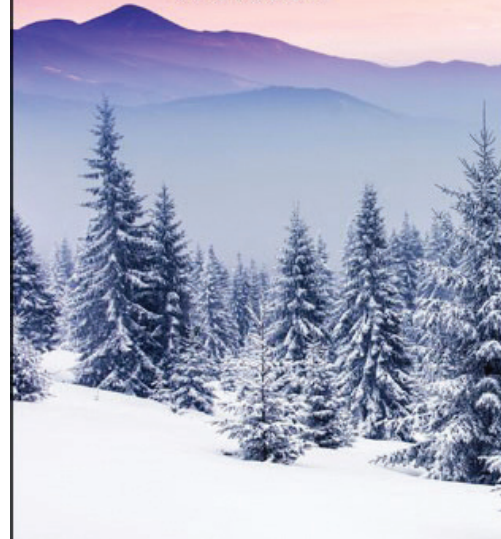


***“Thank you all  
for your hard work  
and compassion.”***

*- Gwen*



*However Cold the  
Winter*



However cold the Winter,  
I find the golden sun.  
However dark the night hours,  
The dawn is sure to come.  
Though storm clouds often gather,  
There still is peace to lend,  
And when the storm is over,  
A rainbow 'round the bend.  
However cold the Winter,  
The Spring will melt the snow,  
And then the Maytime flowers  
Will set the world aglow.  
The ever-changing seasons  
Have so much to impart,  
And somehow each in turn it seems  
Lends laughter to my heart.  
The beauty of the Autumn,  
The Summer's magic bliss,  
And each December snowflake  
Is like an angel's kiss.  
Each sunrise - every sunset  
Has so much warmth to bring.  
However cold the Winter,  
It always ends in Spring.

- Garnett Ann Schultz

## Our December Champion of Hope

### Jeffery Shoop

Jeffery Shoop came to SPOHNC after his diagnosis of cancer of the oropharynx in 2011. Jeff joined the SPOHNC Harrisburg, PA support group in 2013, where he gained the



support of others like himself as he began his cancer journey. Upon the closing of the Harrisburg group, Jeff became a regular attendee of the Penn Hershey SPOHNC Chapter support group where he still remains today,

supporting others along the cancer journey that is such an integral part of his life and who he is today.

Jeff has become such an important member of our SPOHNC family since then, authoring a very informative sharing story for an issue of "News from SPOHNC," serving on multiple patient panels, and doing surveys, interviews for articles in cancer support publications and magazines, producing videos where he shares his cancer journey and even sharing his cancer journey with pharmaceutical companies who seek out the patient perspective for cancer care and drug development. He also contributed to an article for NRG Oncology entitled *The Patient Advocate Perspective: The Importance of Awareness*. Jeff is an amazing human.

In March of 2021, we finally asked

Jeff to become an "official" member of our SPOHNC family of volunteers for our National Survivor Volunteer Network matching program. He had already helped so many by connecting about his experience with a recurrence of his head and neck cancer, and his experience with immunotherapy.

Jeff is a patient advocate and has become entrenched in the head and neck cancer support community over the years, offering valuable insight to many who seek out answers, experiences and his special brand of knowledge. In his sharing story, which can be found in the April 2018 issue of "News from SPOHNC" Jeff had these words to say...

*"Tenacity, a positive approach, and a willingness to find the best chances are essential in the course of any treatment."*

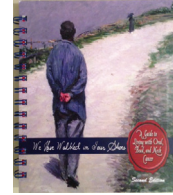
*"You'll meet some amazing people during treatment days; café attendants, hospital workers, nurses, infusion specialists, Dr.'s and other patients."*

And finally...

*"Please remember, never stop looking for another treatment, never stop asking questions and never accept unreasonable answers."*

This month, SPOHNC is honoring Jeffrey Shoop as our featured **Champion of Hope**. Thank you, Jeff, for all that you do for the oral, head and neck cancer community. SPOHNC is grateful for you!

SPOHNC's most popular resource for newly diagnosed patients...



### ***We Have Walked In Your Shoes: A Guide to Living With Oral, Head and Neck Cancer***

by Nancy E. Leupold & James J. Sciubba, DMD, PhD

**DIGITAL EDITION  
Available NOW!**

To purchase this welcoming resource in a digital format, go to [spohnc.org](http://spohnc.org), and order online. You will receive a link to download the book. Save space on your bookshelf and purchase this digital edition today for \$7.99.

Still want to hold the book in your hands?

***We Have Walked in Your Shoes*** is still available in print  
Order today at [spohnc.org](http://spohnc.org)

\$14.95 includes shipping and handling.  
For Bulk order Discount Pricing contact SPOHNC at 1-800-377-0928



*YOU are important to SPOHNC. That's why we created this ongoing survey. We want to know how we can be better – for YOU. Please access the survey by scanning the QR code using your mobile phone.*

**You can also take this survey at: [tinyurl.com/SPOHNC](https://tinyurl.com/SPOHNC)**





## TOGETHER WE HEAL

### Who Are You Thankful For???

In this season of gratitude, SPOHNC wanted to bring hope and healing to all, so we asked a question...

*Who, or what...  
are you thankful for?*

We got quite a few answers...so here, we share them with you, our readers, for whom WE are thankful!

Enjoy these thoughts, photos and expressions of gratitude...and think about who you might be thankful for. Gratitude and giving are the words of the season. SPOHNC gives thanks for all of you!

- Barbara Nichols-Kushner shared with SPOHNC that she is Thankful for her husband, Paul Kushner and Dr. Mark Urken.

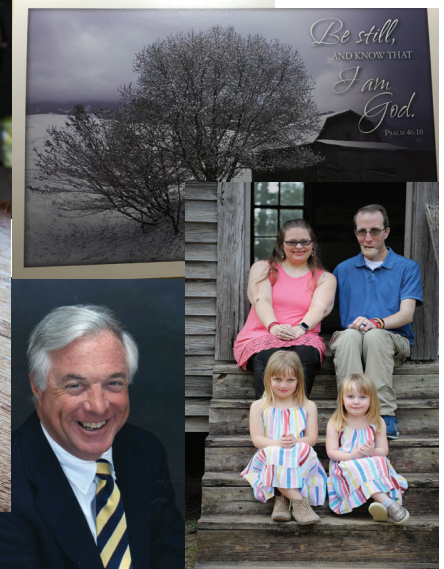
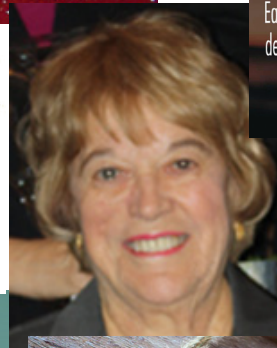
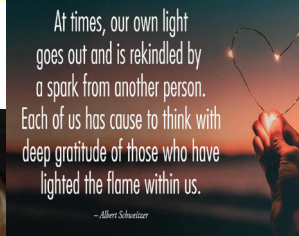
- Pat G. is Thankful for "living to see my first granddaughter, Layla."

- Valerie Targia shared... "Here's hubby Joseph. He was my support throughout my whole ordeal with Stage 3 tonsil cancer (and, as you know OHNC treatments are daunting)."

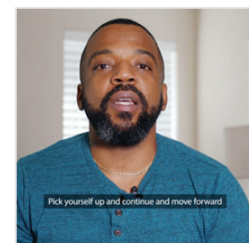
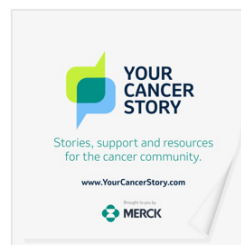
- Lawrence (Laurie) Traynor said... "So much to be grateful for."

- Matt H. said "I am thankful for my beautiful, wonderful family. Diagnosed 17 months ago. Surgery 16 months ago. Finished 32 rads 13 months ago. Currently NED."

- Gene R. shared that "Psalm 46.10 brings me Peace and Comfort. I hope it does the same for all of my family, friends, and, fellow survivors and caregivers."



### Download the Doctor Discussion Guide



There are few things as difficult as navigating #cancercare. While the road may be long, it doesn't need to be traveled alone. In partnership with @Merck, we're proud to share supportive resources to help you have conversations with your medical team.

#MerckPartner

<https://bit.ly/3AvuMpP>



**"Like" SPOHNC on Facebook**

Holiday time can be especially challenging for head and neck cancer patients. Holidays are often associated with eating plenty of rich indulgent dishes, celebrating with friends and family, and the stress of organizing, preparing and shopping for present exchanges and family gatherings. When many things seem out of your control during a head and neck cancer diagnosis, nutrition is something that you can control. With some planning and adjustments, the holidays can be just as enjoyable as they typically are.

Here are some tips, compliments of a prior issue of "News from SPOHNC."

#### *Nutrition Tips for People Experiencing Mouth Sores/Dry Mouth*

- Avoid food and beverages that are salty, spicy, acidic, and rough or coarse in texture. Consume foods at room temperature instead of steaming hot foods
- Eggnog is a mild holiday drink you may enjoy
- Include sauces, liquid, broth, or gravy to moisten hard or crunchy food
- Consume soft foods such as soups, stews, casseroles, egg dishes, tender meats, and well-cooked vegetables or grains
- Adjust your holiday recipes to avoid harsh flavors like black pepper, chili flakes, vinegar, and lemon; serve these on the side for others to flavor if desired
- Drink fluids through a straw to divert away from painful areas
- Stay hydrated and drink plenty of fluids. Sip on fluids throughout the day
- Discuss with your medical team if and when drinking alcohol is safe

#### *Nutrition Tips for People Experiencing Difficulty Swallowing*

- Avoid foods that are spicy, acidic, and rough or coarse in texture
- Consume soft foods such as soups, stews, casseroles, egg dishes, tender meats, and well-cooked vegetables or grains
- Use sauces, liquid, or gravy to moisten and soak foods may make it easier to swallow

## Holiday Nutrition Tips

- You may consider preparing, or asking a friend/family member to prepare a soft cooked version of part of the meal for you. Food preparation techniques such as steaming and pureeing may adapt the meal to your requirements. Steaming vegetables until they are very soft allows for easy mashing, and cooking down protein foods in sauce or gravy, until they are fork tender, may make them easier to swallow
- Fill up on a liquid nutrition supplement or smoothie before leaving the house, in case soft and liquid options are limited at the holiday gathering
- Consume foods at room temperature



#### *Nutrition Tips for People Experiencing Taste Alterations*

- Rinse with a warm water/ baking soda solution to freshen palate before and after meals (recipe for baking soda rinse: 1 quart water, ¾ teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon baking soda). Do not swallow this mouth rinse
- Use a non-alcohol based mouthwash such as Biotene, as alcohol containing mouth wash can make the mouth dry
- If red meats taste strange, try substituting other proteins in your recipe, such as chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, dairy, beans, or tofu. If you typically prepare a red meat based recipe for the holiday, you may prepare an easy baked fish recipe in addition
- Consider that your favorite holiday dish may have an altered taste
- Avoid favorite foods on the days around or the day of head and neck cancer treatment
- Prior to holiday meals, spend time with friends and family outside of the kitchen, either on an outdoor patio or separate room to avoid strong smells of food cooking
- Delegate someone to cook recipes that have strong smells

#### *Nutrition Tips for People Experiencing Appetite Loss*

- Don't be afraid to delegate if you are hosting the party, suggest that friends and family take on other responsibilities that encourage them to help in ways, other than preparing your favorite holiday dish
- Eat small frequent meals (5-6 times a day) instead of 3 large meals. Aiming to eat at least every 2-3 hours
- Add extra calories by adding extra butter, oil, mayonnaise, sauces, dressing, gravy, honey, jam, cheese, and nut butters to meals
- Add extra protein by including poultry, meat, fish, eggs, yogurt, cheese, beans and nuts to meals and snacks. Dried milk powder mixed in gravies, soups, milk-based beverages and sauces can also add extra protein
- Drink high calorie liquids such as juice, milkshakes, eggnog and hot chocolate made with whole milk
- Drink fluids half an hour before or after meals as some people find consuming beverages with meals can make them feel fuller
- Be active. Exercise can help stimulate appetite. Enjoy a walk with a family member before meal time

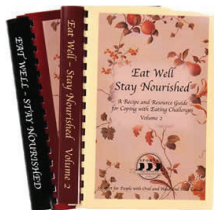
#### *Nutrition Tips for People Experiencing Nausea and Vomiting*

- Take antiemetics half an hour to an hour before holiday meals, as instructed by your medical team
- Having an empty stomach may make nausea and vomiting worse. Aim to eat regularly scheduled meals and snacks, even if it is just a few bites. Often, dry carbohydrates like toast, dry cereal or crackers are well tolerated
- Avoid any holiday dish in a sauce that is very creamy, heavy, or spicy
- Drink large amounts of fluids separate from meals, try to separate beverages and solid food by a half an hour as filling up on both may make nausea worse
- Bring ginger tea and ginger snap cookies to your holiday celebration. Ginger can help manage symptoms of nausea



***Eat Well Stay Nourished  
A Recipe and  
Resource Guide  
for Coping With  
Eating Challenges***  
compiled by Nancy E. Leupold,  
Founder, in memoriam

*SPOHNC is offering a great  
bargain for its Eat Well  
Stay Nourished  
Vol. One and Vol. Two  
Cookbooks...Buy One Get One  
(BOGO).*



*Both cookbooks help to prepare  
recipes for those who are coping with  
eating challenges. Purchase a gift set  
for your loved one or friend who you  
know is struggling with their daily  
meal plans for nutrition.*



***For a limited time SPOHNC  
is offering a discounted price  
of \$25.00 (includes shipping &  
handling) for both Volume One  
and Volume Two...  
a \$15.00 savings.***

*Go to [spohnc.org](http://spohnc.org) to order  
or call SPOHNC today  
at 1-800-377-0928*

**Delightful December Recipes from  
“Eat Well Stay Nourished A Recipe and Resource Guide  
For Coping With Eating Challenges”**

*Compiled and Edited by Nancy E. Leupold, Founder, in memoriam*

***Baked Crab Casserole (from Volume Two)***

¼ c. minced green onions  
2 Tbsp. butter  
¼ c. all-purpose flour  
2 c. milk  
¼ tsp. pepper  
¼ tsp. celery salt  
1 egg yolk, lightly beaten  
2 Tbsp. dry sherry  
1 c. fresh white breadcrumbs, divided  
1 lb. crabmeat  
1 Tbsp. chopped parsley and paprika (garnish)



Saute green onions in butter in medium saucepan until tender, about 3 minutes. Stir in flour and cook 1 minute. Whisk in milk, pepper and celery salt; heat to boiling over medium heat, whisking constantly. Remove from heat; whisk in egg yolk. Stir in sherry, ½ c. breadcrumbs, crabmeat and parsley. Spoon into greased casserole dish. Top with remaining breadcrumbs. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake uncovered at 400 degrees for 25 minutes until hot and bubbly. Serves 4. 315 calories/serving.

*~ Anonymous*

***Panna Cotta with Huckleberry Sauce (from Volume One)***

Panna Cotta:  
1 ½ c. heavy cream  
½ c. milk  
2 vanilla beans  
3 Tbsp. sugar  
¼ oz. Knox gelatin  
Water

Huckleberry Sauce:  
2 lbs. huckleberries or blueberries (plus a few extra)  
1 ½ c. sugar (plus extra)  
Whipped cream for garnish



In a saucepan over medium heat, warm the heavy cream, milk and vanilla beans. Add the sugar and stir to dissolve. Remove from heat and cool for 30 minutes to infuse the vanilla. Dissolve gelatin in small amount of tepid water for about 5 minutes. Stir in the warm milk mixture. Fill 6 ramekins with the panna cotta mixture and refrigerate until set. Meanwhile, prepare the huckleberry sauce. In a pot over medium heat, combine the huckleberries and sugar. Simmer for 1 to 2 hours or until the sauce becomes thick. Set aside to cool. Transfer to a blender (reserving several berries) and puree. Pass the puree through a sieve to remove the skins. Mix the reserved berries with the pureed sauce. To unmold the panna cotta, place the ramekins in a small pot of hot water to loosen. Invert onto a plate. Garnish with the huckleberry sauce; top with whipped cream and some huckleberries tossed in sugar. Yields 6 servings. 511 calories/serving

*~ Mary Ann and Larry Caputo, NY*

## News We Can All Use Stress...

*Especially at this time of year, and even more so at this time in our country, and our world, let this information from the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, a division of the National Institutes of Health, be your guide...*

Stress is a physical and emotional reaction that people experience as they encounter changes in life. Stress is a normal feeling. However, long-term stress may contribute to or worsen a range of health problems including digestive disorders, headaches, sleep disorders, and other symptoms. Stress may worsen asthma and has been linked to depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses.

- Some people use **relaxation techniques** (also called relaxation response techniques) to release tension and to counteract the ill effects of stress. Relaxation



techniques often combine breathing and focused attention on pleasing thoughts and images to calm the mind and the body. Some examples of relaxation response techniques are autogenic training, biofeedback, deep breathing, guided imagery, progressive relaxation, and self-hypnosis.

- The scientific evidence suggests that **mindfulness meditation**—a

practice that cultivates abilities to maintain focused and clear attention and develop increased awareness of the present—may help reduce symptoms of stress, including anxiety and depression.

- Some but not all studies of **yoga** for stress management have shown improvements in physical or psychological measures related to stress.

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## Winter

*Ice upon the branches.  
Snow upon the ground.  
Wind among the evergreens,  
so cold the distant sounds.  
Flakes of snow fall heavy,  
as daytime turns to night.  
Forest life protected,  
in a cloak of silver white.*

*Midnight fades to daybreak,  
as stillness calms the view.  
Tiny snowflakes drifting,  
toward the spectacle anew.  
a misty veil of droplets,  
shields new snow from the sun.  
Nature sleeps in silence,  
in a winter just begun.*

*- by Pamela Joyce Ranaólgifi*

## XEROSTOMIA EXTERNALLY LED PATIENT-FOCUSED DRUG DEVELOPMENT MEETING

Interactive Live Stream • August 19, 2021



**SPOHNC, The THANC (Thyroid, Head and Neck Cancer) Foundation, NFOSD (National Foundation of Swallowing Disorders), HNCA, and many others are pleased to share the recording of the Xerostomia EL-PFDD Meeting, held on Thursday, August 19, 2021. (Learn more about dry mouth)**

*View the recording at*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0diX2-naOH4>

**“Like” SPOHNC on Facebook**



## 7 Tips for Making the Most of This Holiday Season

The holiday season can be a wonderful time of year, filled with cherished traditions and quality time spent with loved ones. However, the holidays can also be stressful with doctor's appointments, treatment, side effects, and the emotional strain of cancer. The holiday craze of planning, decorating, and cooking can become exhausting.

When planning how to celebrate the holidays during COVID-19, it is important to consider the risk involved, especially when going through cancer treatment.

While there's no one-size-fits-all approach to celebrating, here are some tips to help you make the most of the holiday season.

### 1. *Be flexible.*

Cancer takes time and energy, and it may not be sustainable to take part in every holiday tradition that you're accustomed to. Reframe your expectations. Modify your usual holiday traditions to meet your needs this year, or create new ones that make the most of your energy.

Everything does not need to be "perfect" in order for you to have a wonderful holiday. To maintain realistic goals, make a list of the holiday activities you want and need. This will help you simplify the holidays by possibly replacing or eliminating physically taxing traditions, having catered meals instead of cooking, or delegating tasks to others.

Think about what the holiday season means to you and your family. Don't get too wrapped up in what might be missing or what traditions aren't being kept. Remember what the holidays are truly about, and focus on the present moment.

### 2. *Don't overcommit yourself.*

You may not always feel up for participating in holiday events. Plan activities for when you feel at your best, and avoid overworking your body and mind. Take a break from the festivities when you need to. It's OK to say no. You shouldn't feel obligated to take part in every festivity that comes your way.

Saying yes to everything can lead to stress and exhaustion. Be gentle with yourself. Your loved ones will understand if you can't participate in every holiday activity. Limit yourself to what you can

manage and enjoy, and find a balance between activities and rest throughout the holiday season.

### 3. *Communicate with loved ones.*

Express how you feel with loved ones, and let them know what you want to do this holiday season and what you need help with. You don't have to do it all, especially by yourself. If someone offers help, accept it. This will allow you to preserve your energy during the long holiday season.

Be very clear about your limits and boundaries. You may feel like you're disappointing others in order to keep yourself and your loved ones safe, but that is your decision to make. It is very possible that you and the people you normally spend the holidays with see things very different in terms of the pandemic. It is better to disappoint someone temporarily than to risk exposure.

### 4. *Be with people who lift your spirits.*

Spend time with people who make you happier, and not those who drag you down. Don't feel like you have to spend time around negative relatives just because it's the holidays. When you have limited time and energy, it's best to spend it with the people who matter most. Enjoy those special moments with your loved ones, and try not to focus on your cancer.

### 5. *Take a breather.*

Slow down. Sometimes the holidays get so busy we forget to relax. Allow yourself to do less than you're accustomed to during this time of year. Strike a balance between downtime and social time. Set aside days where you don't have much planned so that you don't wear yourself out this holiday season. Find what's meaningful to you. Give yourself plenty of "you" time, and do what makes you happy. Sit by the fire and listen to holiday music or watch a festive movie.

### 6. *Be mindful of your eating habits and keep moving.*

It's easy to overindulge when there are seasonal goodies everywhere you look. Control your portions. Eat balanced meals, and avoid drinking excessive amounts of alcohol. Give your body plenty of the

healthy food it needs.

It's OK to say no. You shouldn't feel obligated to take part in every festivity that comes your way.

It's easy to forget about exercise during the holidays, but it's important to make time for it. Get your loved ones involved. Go on walks with family members, or build a snowman with the kids. Physical activity can help you feel better mentally and physically and give you more energy. Just make sure to talk with your doctor before starting any exercise program.

### 7. *Spread the love.*

The pandemic has been especially difficult on senior adults who are experiencing not only a more heightened sense of loss due to restrictions but also isolation and loneliness. And some may have lost more loved ones due to COVID-19. Reach out to these individuals in your life with phone calls, video chats, handwritten letters and cards, and socially distanced outdoor visits, if possible.

Encourage your children to write letters or draw pictures of what they love most about their grandparents and other loved ones. If you always bake cookies with your grandmother, arrange to bake them together over a video chat.

It's common to feel confused, overwhelmed or depressed during the holidays, even without the added burden of cancer and COVID-19. If you find yourself struggling, it's OK to reach out to your healthcare team for help. During your cancer journey, you and your loved ones have developed strong coping skills, and now is the time to build on them.

*\*reprinted with permission from Coping Magazine - by Kaylene Isherwood and Ashley Hubbard*



## Survivor News

Survivor and SPOHNC Syosset, NY Chapter Facilitator, Frank Marcovitz, is on tour again. If you missed it, that's because he only tours college classes on Long Island – and his recent 2021 tour included Hofstra University, and a new one... where he also was able to include 2 other survivors from the Syosset, NY SPOHNC Chapter support group. Frank and company paid a visit to Long Island University, Post.

Each year for the last 7 years, Frank has spoken to the graduate studies class in Hofstra University's speech pathologist program – and it's a volunteer opportunity that he holds near and dear. It's a great way for the students to gain real world knowledge of the challenges and victories of a laryngectomy survivor. Frank and his zest for life are undoubtedly a great addition to the class!

As a new opportunity this year, Frank, Tony Ricci and Ed Gellender spoke to the graduate class of John Amato, ED, CCC at LIU Post. John is also Director of the Center for Speech, Swallowing, and Voice Disorders and Clinical Assistant Professor

of Surgery at Stony Brook Southampton Hospital in Southampton, NY.

The students were engaged, interested and grateful that these 3 gentlemen took the time from their day to give a real-life education to the class by sharing the story of their individual cancer journeys.

This opportunity arose after John Amato served as a guest speaker for the virtual monthly meeting of the SPOHNC Syosset, NY Chapter Support group. John asked Frank and his fellow survivors to speak to his

Thank you, John Amato, for inviting these amazing men to speak at your class, and thank you Frank, Tony and Ed, for sharing your time, and your cancer journey with these young people. We are certain that they learned a lot from you, and we know how much you enjoyed the opportunity to share your journey. We can see it by the smiles on your faces in the photo!

*Editor's Note: SPOHNC is deeply saddened to share that just prior to the printing of this issue, Anthony Ricci tragically and unexpectedly passed away. On behalf of SPOHNC's Board of Directors, members and staff, the SPOHNC family extends our most heartfelt condolences to Tony's family and friends, and to those who came to know him through the SPOHNC Syosset, NY Chapter support group. Our hearts are with you all.*



swallowing disorders classes, saying "they are group of very smart and caring future speech pathologists who could learn a great deal from someone such as yourself, who is thriving with a laryngectomy. I often tell my patients to never allow their disease and/or disorder to define who they are, and you truly are an excellent example of someone who is following that same philosophy!"

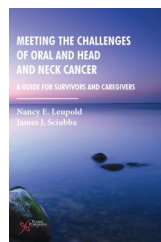


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Contact SPOHNC at 1-800-377-0928 for Chapter information & Facilitator contact information.

PLEASE NOTE: Many Chapters are not holding meetings in person at this time due to COVID-19.

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Please call to SPOHNC at 1-800-377-0928 to find out more information.

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