



Returning to Work - Core and Educational Programs

Intended Audience

All members living with cancer. Significant caregivers also welcome if needed.

Program Description

Members often have a variety of concerns when considering returning to work after living with a cancer diagnosis. This eight-week educational and support program is a signature Wellspring Calgary program designed to address these career-related concerns and provide support and strategies for dealing with them. Under the guidance of accomplished and attentive facilitators, this program offers personalized preparation for returning to work, tips on managing health and personal information at work, and assistance in developing a primary self-care plan to support sustained health and wellness.

Also offered

- 1) **Legal and Employment Matters:** Legal and HR specialists clarify your legal rights as an employee. *(See Wellspring Calgary programs brochure)*
- 2) **Resumes and Interviews:** Learn to craft an effective resume for today's workplace and practice your interview skills with HR professionals. *(See Wellspring Calgary programs brochure)*
- 3) **Money Matters:** A solution-based program that assists members in navigating income replacement programs, insurance issues, drug coverage and many other topics. By appointment only. *(See Wellspring Calgary programs brochure)*

Benefits and Impact

The information and tools delivered in this program are well-researched and highly-effective, but these are just some of the benefits to members negotiating the transition of returning to work after living with cancer. Equally important, members benefit from asking questions, voicing concerns and sharing common emotions in a secure, expertly facilitated environment. The outcome of this group encounter is often enlightenment, encouragement and empowerment to take the next step.

What to Expect at a Session

Members participate in eight, two-hour sessions. Topics covered include: the impact of cancer in work and life; decisions and considerations for returning to work; communication and negotiation with employers; and, physical and emotional challenges. In addition to listening and sharing, participants engage in brainstorming sessions, hear from others who have returned to work, and develop personal self care plans. If returning to work sounds like work, Wellspring Calgary's program lights the way with compassion and humour.

Participant Comments

- "Excellent model for 'coping with change' with transitions and strategies for self-care."*
- "Great program - really enjoyed it. Found most sessions very thought provoking."*
- "Excellent information and I loved the facilitators."*

What the Research Says:

A high percentage of cancer patients return to work after treatment and workplace accommodation is pivotal in their successful return. The perceived willingness of the employer to accommodate a worker's illness and treatment needs is an important factor for return to work (Bouknight et al., 2006).

In a literature review and consultation in 2012 regarding returning to work concerns "60% of respondents indicated their income had decreased following their diagnosis." Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, Return to Work Concerns Faced by People Dealing with Cancer and Caregivers, Literature Review and Consultation, 2012.

According to a research report conducted by the Canadian Breast Cancer Network in 2009, "80% of respondents experienced a financial impact. On average, a \$12,000 drop in annual household income was reported." Canadian Breast Cancer Network, Breast Cancer Economic Impact and Labour Force Re-Entry, 2009.

Program Frequency:

2 hours per week
8 weeks per program
1-2 programs per session
 Winter, spring/summer, fall

Optimum class size: 12

Related Programs:

Brain Fog
 Money Matters
 The Healing Journey