



## Young Adult Programs (YA)

### Intended Audience

For all members living with cancer who are 18 to 39(ish) years old.

### Program Description

Wellspring Calgary is continually developing and expanding its Young Adults (YA) programs in an effort to minimize feelings of isolation, and unite and support young people who are living with cancer. Programs with themes related to work, family, health and fitness vary from session to session, all reflecting Wellspring's overarching themes of education, movement, meditation and expressive arts. YAs are also welcome to take part in any of the Wellspring programs offered for all members. The goal is to build community and create meaningful experiences while addressing young people's need for social connection, information and fun.

### Benefits and Impact

Young people living with cancer often encounter unique challenges related to peer interactions, relationships, education, careers, family, and finances. At Wellspring Calgary, YA facilitators understand these challenges, have overcome these issues in their own lives, and offer informed and creative outlets to help manage these experiences. YA members benefit by sharing, reflecting and recognizing that they are not alone in their journey. At Wellspring, members experience acceptance, self-worth, inspiration, joy, and the sense that they belong.

### What to Expect at a Session

YA programs are invigorating, enlightening and fun. Programs offered include Bootcamp (fitness), Food and Nutrition, Money Matters, yoga, expressive arts, 'Urban Explorer' and other social outings such as ski days, barbecues, movie nights and hikes. Members are exposed to a broader network of resources aimed at helping them with their informational needs and helping manage their cancer experience. At Wellspring, individuals are often in the process of reinventing themselves or finding their 'new normal', and as they find their way, they are welcomed, fortified, affirmed and inspired.

### Additional Notes

\*Members connect by email or phone with the Wellspring YA program team leader at [youngadult@wellspringcalgary.ca](mailto:youngadult@wellspringcalgary.ca)

\* Wellspring collaborates with and encourages involvement in Young Adult Cancer Canada (YACC), a Canadian organization with 'localife' offerings in Calgary.

### Participant Comments

*"I feel comfortable being with others who understand."*

*"I have made some great new friends here. The information is very helpful and the activities are fun."*

### What the Research Says:

In a study assessing the health care needs of adolescent and young adult (AYA) cancer patients and survivors, a key outcome indicated that AYA cancer patients benefit from peer involvement, specifically, "...opportunities to meet others whom they can observe as sharing similar experiences can provide AYAs with a chance to address areas of concern, such as coping with uncertainty, forced dependence on others, social exclusion, body image, intimacy, sexuality and fertility, and career plans." In a more recent study addressing the needs of AYA cancer survivors, results indicated that AYAs experience difficulty seeking and sharing information regarding their cancer and "...more than half of them had unmet informational needs relating to their cancer returning and cancer treatments." According to the first study: "These findings suggest areas in which to target investments of resources to promote quality health care and appropriate informational and supportive care services and to overcome the deficit in survival improvement that has occurred in young adults and older adolescents with cancer." (Zebrack et al. 2006. Adolescent and Young Health Care Needs. Cancer 2006; 107:2915-23.) (Keegan T, Lichtensztajn D et al. 2012. Unmet adolescent and young adult cancer survivors' information and service needs. J Cancer Surviv (2012) 6:239-250.)

### Program Frequency:

Weekly / single event

Optimum class size: 16

### Related Programs:

All Wellspring programs open to YAs