Healing Through Movement and Dance for the Cancer Patient

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Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center's Focus on Healing through Movement class improves movement and reduces pain.

Fragile I come for support, caring, fun, laughter, conversation, healing. I leave with joy, hope, friends, belonging, strength. My body is stretched, strengthened, energized, valued. My being is whole again." — Barbara Cummings

Those who participate in regular exercise programs enjoy the many lifeenriching benefits. Recently, an exciting new program incorporating movement, exercise, and dance is being offered at Eisenhower Medical Center targeting the lymphatic system, and it's the only exercise program of its kind specifically for cancer patients in the Coachella Valley.

The Lebed Method® was developed in 1979 by Sherry Davis, a professional dancer and choreographer, in conjunction with Joel Lebed, DO (Doctor of Osteopathy), and Marc R. Lebed, MD. It consists of passive and active motions of the upper and lower extremities to facilitate healing through movement and dance. The program – originally designed for women who had breast cancer surgery, node dissection, chemotherapy, radiation, and plastic surgery – can also help prostate cancer patients by promoting a more active lifestyle. A patient can regain and maintain a range of motion after surgery, while reducing the risk of lymphedema, frozen shoulder syndrome, as well as neck and back pain.

Patients who have been diagnosed with, survived, or are in pre-treatment or post-treatment for breast cancer, prostate cancer, other cancers, fatigue and lymphedema are among those who can benefit from the Lebed method. Activities are designed to stretch the body to improve movement limited by scar tissue, increase upper/lower body mobility and reduce pain. Other benefits include stimulating circulation and the lymphatic immune system, increasing energy, stabilizing weight, reducing depression and helping prevent future health problems. A structural rebalancing is also achieved to improve posture, coordination and standing.

Program participants have experienced a renewed and more positive self-image, a feeling of empowerment, and a re-established sense of beauty and sexuality. Most importantly, a bond develops which connects and supports participants, decreasing fears and social isolation.

The Lebed method takes traditional physiotherapy movements and translates them into dance and exercise providing a more motivating environment.The music stimulates patients to move more freely and takes their mind off pain and physical limitations. The six-week course includes breathing exercises, a lymphatic system warm up, range of motion, cardiopulmonary exercise, theraband resisted exercise, and a cool-down period. It is offered once weekly for one-hour sessions over a six-week period.

"By choosing this program you are honoring the needs of your body and making the commitment to the quality of your life," Sherry Lebed Davis explains. "You have chosen to thrive. As cancer survivors, you have unique needs and concerns…both physical and emotional. But none are a reason to avoid exercise."

Focus on Healing through Movement – Lebed Method ® Thursdays from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center For more information, or to enroll, please call 760-674-3602.

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