

Title: A Time to Heal: A 12-Week Holistic Rehabilitation Program for Breast Cancer Survivors

Category II, E: Complementary and Integrative Care
Authors: Stephanie Koraleski, PhD and Kay Ryan, RN, PhD

Contact: Charlene Wallace, RN, MS, OCN
Shawnee Mission Medical Center (SMMC)

charlene.wallace@shawneemission.org

Phone: 913-676-6858

Cell: 913-707-8549

Fax: 913-789-3212

Goals:

- Improve the quality of life for post-treatment breast cancer patients
- Increase patients' knowledge about health-enhancing activities
- Encourage self advocacy by training patients to listen to their bodies, notice their symptoms, and communicate well with medical professionals
- Make survivorship resources readily available by providing information about books, Web sites, and services that provide information and support to cancer survivors
- Increase the hope and life satisfaction of the participants

Methods:

A Time to Heal is 12-week group rehabilitation program of information and activities for enhancing health and wellness in the social, physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional facets of a woman's life recognizing that each of these facets is affected by the experience of breast cancer. Women who had completed surgery, chemotherapy, and/or radiation treatments for a first occurrence of breast cancer were eligible to enroll in **A Time to Heal**. Groups were limited to no more than 15 women. During each of the 12 group sessions there was a short period of light exercise focused on regaining arm and upper body strength and flexibility and good posture; an educational presentation on a topic relevant to physical, emotional, or spiritual issues following breast cancer; activities such as discussion or writing to process the topic of the week; a period of relaxation training; and time to share experiences with other women who have completed breast cancer treatment. The program consisted of one 2 1/2 to 3 hour session each week for 12 weeks.

Women were assessed approximately 3 months prior to participation, at the beginning of the 12-week group, at the last group session, and 6 months after the group ended using standardized psychosocial measures [FACIT-Sp, BSI-18, Post Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI), Hope scale (HS), Satisfaction with Life Inventory (SWL)]. Scores of group participants were compared with a wait-listed control group's scores to determine whether a structured program of holistic rehabilitation can improve quality of life for women who have completed treatment for breast cancer.

Results:

The scores on the above-mentioned tools demonstrated the following:

- Increase in satisfaction with life
- Increase in hope
- Increase in positive changes
- Reduction in psychological distress
- Increase in quality of life

Conclusion: The "A Time to Heal" organized program of rehabilitation improved women's perceived physical and psychological health after breast cancer treatment.