

When someone
close to you
has metastatic
breast cancer



Breast
Cancer
Network
Australia



About us

Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) is the peak national organisation for Australians affected by breast cancer. We provide a range of free resources, including the *My Journey Kit* for people newly diagnosed with breast cancer and *Hope & Hurdles* for people with metastatic breast cancer. Our free twice-yearly magazine, *The Beacon*, includes stories from people sharing their experiences, as well as information on a wide range of breast cancer issues. Visit our website bcna.org.au for more information or to connect with others through our online network.

BCNA's partners and sponsors raise much needed funds to ensure we can continue to support people affected by breast cancer.

Foundation Partner



Major Partners



February 2018

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Metastatic breast cancer: an overview | 3 |
| Supporting someone with metastatic breast cancer | 3 |
| Providing practical support | 4 |
| Providing emotional support | 7 |
| Common feelings and concerns when supporting someone with cancer | 11 |
| You're important too: getting help and support for yourself | 12 |
| Emotional support for partners | 14 |
| Financial and practical support | 15 |
| Specialised support for carers | 16 |
| Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) partners | 17 |
| Practical ways to take care of yourself | 18 |
| Further information and support | 21 |
| Acknowledgements | 28 |

Introduction

Supporting someone (a partner, family member, friend or neighbour) with metastatic breast cancer can be one of the most challenging times of your life. It can be a very stressful and frightening time, not only for the person diagnosed, but also for the people close to them. Knowing what to do, what to say and how to provide good support can be confusing and confronting.

This booklet will:

- explain what metastatic breast cancer means
- provide useful tips and information to help you support or care for someone with metastatic breast cancer
- guide you through some of the common concerns and feelings that you might experience when supporting or caring for someone with metastatic breast cancer
- outline helpful sources of practical, financial and emotional support
- provide tips on looking after yourself so that you can better support the person close to you.



Metastatic breast cancer: an overview

Metastatic breast cancer is when cancer cells have spread from the original (primary) cancer site in the breast to other more distant parts of the body. You may hear terms such as advanced breast cancer, secondary breast cancer, stage IV (4) breast cancer and secondaries. These are all different ways of describing metastatic breast cancer – but they all mean the same thing.

If breast cancer does spread, it is most likely to be found in the bones, liver or lungs, although it can sometimes be found in the brain or other areas. It may affect one, or more than one, location at the same time.

It is not known why some breast cancers spread and others don't. It is also not known why some spread very early and others do not spread for years. Treatment for early breast cancer reduces the risk of cancer spreading, but these treatments are not always 100 per cent effective and metastatic disease will still occur in some cases. It's important to know that although metastatic breast cancer is not currently considered curable, it is very treatable. For most people, it can be controlled for years. There have been a small number of people whose metastatic breast cancer has been in remission so long it is thought they may be cured. It is hoped that with increasingly effective treatments in coming years, this will not be such a rare occurrence.

Supporting someone with metastatic breast cancer

While the person you know who is living with metastatic breast cancer may have long periods of being well, they will have ongoing treatment and support needs. The support you provide may depend on the level of care the person needs at different times, the level of care you can provide and the relationship you have.

You can provide support in many different ways – practical, physical, emotional and spiritual.

You may find some things come more naturally to you than others.

No matter the scenario, your support will contribute to overcoming hurdles, and help the person close to you enjoy life with hope and happy times.

Providing practical support

Many people don't know where to start when it comes to helping a person with a serious illness. Below are some practical tips and strategies that might be helpful for you.

Tips for partners and close family members

Partners and family members commonly report feeling frustrated and helpless over not being able to 'fix' their loved one's breast cancer. If you feel this way too, the following may help you to provide some practical support:

- Ask the person you are caring for if they would like you to go to medical appointments with them and/or help them to keep track of appointments with a schedule. Write a list of questions you or the person you are caring for might want to ask at appointments, and take notes when you are there. These can be useful to refer back to later.
- Prepare meals, or arrange a meal delivery schedule among family members and friends.
- Coordinate visits from others, which might include creating a schedule for visits. Offer to take phone calls and update others.
- Help with day-to-day tasks, such as running errands, doing a weekly grocery shop, helping with washing and ironing clothes, or taking children to their activities.
- A disruption to the usual routine may be a welcome relief. Perhaps organise a trip to the theatre or cinema, dinner with friends, a picnic or a walk – or simply order some take-away and watch a movie together.
- Consider reading about breast cancer. Some partners and family members find that improving what they know about breast cancer can help them feel more in control and better equipped to understand what is happening and what they can do to help. But for others, too much information can be overwhelming. Do what feels best for you.
- Ask other family members and friends for help. You might need to tell them exactly what you need, such as looking after children while you go grocery shopping, or helping with the ironing once a fortnight.

- Call Centrelink, your local council or community health service and ask what practical or financial assistance they may be able to provide.
- Talk with your employer about flexible working arrangements, especially if you are a partner or family member providing regular support or care.

Tips for friends and colleagues

Often friends and colleagues are anxious to help but are unsure what they can do.

The important thing is to let the person (or their partner/ immediate family) tell you what would be most helpful and then offer to help in specific ways.

Examples of what you can do to help might include:

- Treat your friend or colleague normally, but let them know you understand their situation. Don't be afraid to ask how they're feeling and give them opportunities to talk if they want to.
- If you're their workplace manager, establish leave requirements and discuss other ways the workplace may be able to help, such as modified duties.
- Prepare home-cooked meals, soups, biscuits and cakes that can be frozen and used when needed.
- Offer to help with housework, gardening or looking after children or pets.
- Take your friend shopping and carry the bags, or take a list and do it for them.
- If your friend wants information, help them find it.
- Offer to help with school drop-off or pick-up or social and sporting events. Babysit for an afternoon or a day or have the children overnight occasionally.
- Offer to drive them to medical appointments and, if they wish, stay with them while they see the doctor or have treatment. Perhaps you could work out a roster of family and friends to cover each visit.
- If they live alone or have little support, they may appreciate help sorting through medical bills, Medicare claims and household expenses.



BCNA's booklet *Helping a friend or colleague with breast cancer* has more useful tips to help friends and colleagues support someone with breast cancer. For more information visit bcna.org.au or call 1800 500 258.

Keep in touch

Many people affected by breast cancer say that people are very supportive when they are first diagnosed, but the support drops off over time. Metastatic breast cancer is ongoing, with periods of illness and wellness. Offering ongoing support, even during times of wellness, will be very much appreciated.



Image from emilymcdowell.com.

Providing emotional support

When someone close to you is diagnosed, a large part of your role may be supporting that person emotionally. It can be helpful to get an understanding of what the person with metastatic breast cancer might be feeling.

Understanding what the person with breast cancer might be feeling

Every person's experience with metastatic breast cancer is unique, as is the way each individual lives with the disease. Many people feel understandably devastated when they are told they have metastatic disease. Many will have lived through the trauma of being diagnosed and treated for early breast cancer and may have believed they were cured.

The person diagnosed will be facing some very difficult emotions, challenging decisions and tough times. They may be experiencing changes in their body, exhausting treatments and feeling sick, as well as a whole range of emotions. The person's emotions and mood can change from day to day, even from hour to hour. This is normal. There are no specific emotions that someone facing a serious illness will or will not feel. However, emotions commonly felt include shock, anger, sadness, fear, guilt, uncertainty, loneliness, resentment and frustration.

No two people respond in the same way. Learning to live with uncertainty is part of learning to live with metastatic breast cancer, both for the person diagnosed and the people around them.

What can be helpful

Feeling helpless and lost for words is a common reaction when someone close to you receives the news that they have metastatic breast cancer. It is common to worry about saying 'the wrong thing' or not know what to do for someone, even if you are very close to them.

Be there

You won't always say or do 'the right thing'. There are no magic words or actions and you aren't expected to have all the answers. That's okay. Just being there helps the person feel supported.

There will probably be particular days or times of the day when the person you are caring for may feel more unwell than others. Don't be afraid to ask them how they are, but understand that some days they will want to talk about it and some days they may not.

Listen

Sometimes the best thing you can do is to just listen and really hear what is being said. This is how we show empathy - being able to show understanding of what another person may be experiencing. Often the person with breast cancer just wants an opportunity to voice their feelings and concerns and feel understood.

Talk openly and be honest

Try to talk honestly about how you feel. Not talking about struggles or concerns can cause tension. If you find a topic too hard, you can say so and offer to talk about it later. It is best to be honest and open. If there are times you feel unable to talk to the person diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, find a friend, colleague or professional support person able to listen to you (see page 12 for more information about getting support for yourself).

For friends and colleagues who are providing emotional support, it is best to be honest and open about what you can provide. If you feel uncomfortable, or the person you are supporting is experiencing significant distress, there are many places that offer more specialised support. You might suggest they talk to their GP or a counsellor.

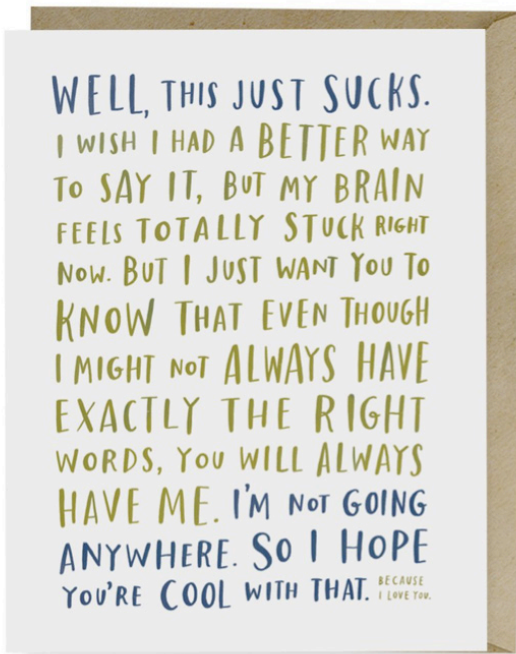


Image from emilymcdowell.com.

What can be unhelpful

Being overly positive

Those with serious illnesses are often told by others that they should always 'be positive'. This message might not be helpful. It is important to allow the person to say how they feel. It can be tempting to try to cheer them up by saying things like, 'Of course you'll be fine, just try to be positive', but this might stop them from talking about how they really feel. It is better to let them speak freely and acknowledge their emotions. Avoid making comments when they don't look as good – chances are they know, and reminding them of this can make them feel self-conscious and embarrassed.

Expecting too much

People can often inadvertently put pressure on those diagnosed by needing or expecting them to be strong all the time. Telling a person to 'Be strong' or 'You are so brave' can make them feel like they need to act strong or brave around you when they may not feel up to it. Saying these things might also seem to discount how they might be really feeling.

Sharing someone else's sad cancer story

You may know someone else with cancer or you may have heard stories. Although you may mean well, try not to tell the person about other people's cancer experience, because no two experiences are the same.

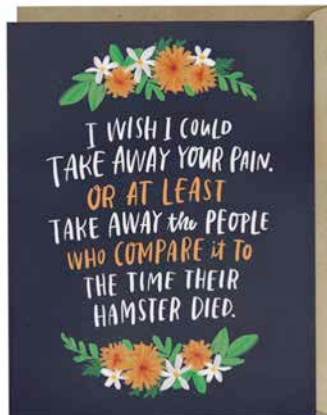


Image from emilymcdowell.com.

Common feelings and concerns when supporting someone with cancer

I didn't cry for a week. My body was in shock and still processing the news that Mum had metastatic breast cancer. When I finally came to a realisation that things were going to change again, I broke down crying. I didn't know who to call or who to talk to. Everyone was sympathetic, but no one really knew what I was going through. It was hard and I was angry at the world, but knew I had to be the strongest daughter that I could be.

Supporting someone close to you through a serious illness is difficult. Going through metastatic breast cancer can be an emotional roller-coaster. This is often not only the case for the person diagnosed, but also for those who are close to them.

People react in different ways, but it is completely normal to experience a range of difficult emotions including shock, numbness, uncertainty, fear, helplessness, sadness, anger and worry.

It is hard enough when your loved one (in my case my husband) is initially diagnosed with breast cancer, but nothing can prepare you for when you receive a diagnosis that the breast cancer has metastasised.



Finding out someone has metastatic breast cancer can mean a loss of many things, such as future plans or the life you had with that person prior to diagnosis. Some people experience what is called 'anticipatory grief'. This is the grief you might feel when you are expecting a significant loss in your life to happen.

Feelings of grief and loss can lead to great worry and concern about the person you are caring for and what the future might hold. This is okay. It can take time to come to terms with what is happening. It is important that you allow yourself time to process these feelings and get emotional support if you need it.

See the section 'Getting emotional support' on page 12 for more information.

Despite the challenges of caring for someone with breast cancer, many people can also find a sense of personal meaning, strength, purpose and satisfaction from helping someone close to them.

You're important too: getting help and support for yourself

Some people believe that they should ignore their feelings and focus on the needs of the person with breast cancer. Doing this for a little while is okay, but if you put your own needs on hold for too long, you may 'burn out' and no longer be able to care for either of you. Paying attention to your own needs and taking care of yourself is an important part of supporting the person close to you.

If you are caring for or supporting someone with metastatic breast cancer, you may need some support to help you in your role.

Getting emotional support

I think it's important to realise that you're only human and you're doing the best you can and you can ask for help. Call the nurse, call your support networks. It's okay, we're not expected to be infallible.

Talk to someone

Sometimes caring can be isolating and distressing. You may find that you are not as involved in social activities and events as you used to be. It is also normal to want to pull away when times are difficult, but it can be very helpful to reach out if you are feeling isolated, stressed or alone.

You may want to talk about your thoughts and feelings with a close friend or family member. Talking to someone other than the person you're caring for about how you're feeling can help you come to terms with the situation and may give you a sense of control. It may also provide you with reassurance that your feelings are normal and that you are not alone.

Some people find it easier talking to someone they don't know. You might find it useful to talk to a professional about how you're feeling. A general practitioner (GP) can refer you to someone with expertise in counselling people with cancer and those who are supporting them.

I was very pleased to be able to talk to someone outside my family without fear of burdening them with my fears.

Visit bcna.org.au/metastatic-breast-cancer to read BCNA's metastatic breast cancer information.



Write it down

One way to acknowledge your feelings is by writing them down, especially if you find talking about them difficult. Keeping a journal, a diary or using social media may help.

BCNA's online network provides a space for sharing tips, asking questions and sharing experiences about supporting someone with metastatic breast cancer and looking after your own wellbeing. There are specific spaces for partners, family, and friends of those with breast cancer to connect.



To join the online network visit bcna.org.au/onlinenetwork.



Emotional support for partners

As a partner, caring for your loved one after a diagnosis of breast cancer can sometimes change your relationship. While being there for each other during a difficult time can strengthen a relationship, it can also present challenges.

You may find that the person you are caring for worries about losing their independence or becoming a 'burden'. You may feel you have lost the intimacy you once had.

If a relationship was difficult before, breast cancer can put a further strain on it. There are many resources and supports available that can help.

Counselling may be available through hospitals and community health centres. Some general cancer support groups welcome partners and families.

Cancer Council's *Caring for someone with cancer* booklet has tips to help partners cope. To download this booklet, visit Cancer Council Victoria's website or call 13 11 20 to find out if the Cancer Council in your state can send you a copy.

Getting help for depression and anxiety

When a caring role significantly impacts on your day-to-day life, it can sometimes feel overwhelming or hard to cope, especially if there is a lot to deal with and manage. Signs of stress can include things like poor sleep, fatigue, unhealthy eating habits and feeling anxious or depressed.

It is not uncommon to experience problems with anxiety and/or depression when caring for someone living with metastatic breast cancer.

Feelings of sadness, withdrawal, worry and grief are normal. However, experiencing these emotions intensely and for long periods of time could mean you are experiencing depression. Depression is more than just a low mood, it is a serious condition that affects your physical and mental health.

If you think you have anxiety or depression, or you would like to speak to a professional about how you are feeling, your GP can refer you to someone who can help.

In the same way that you can get a Medicare rebate when you see a GP, you may also be able to get a Medicare rebate when

you see a counsellor or psychologist. Your GP needs to draw up a GP mental health treatment plan for you before your first appointment. This will allow you to have up to 10 Medicare-subsidised appointments with a mental health professional.

Financial and practical support

The financial challenges that people with metastatic breast cancer, their partners and families face can be overwhelming. The costs associated with treatment and care can be substantial and ongoing. General day-to-day expenses continue, as well as additional expenses such as specialist appointments, medications, treatments and tests, counselling, travel and other costs related to treatment and care.

If the person with metastatic breast cancer can no longer work in their usual capacity and you are required to take time off work to care for and support them, the loss of income may contribute to financial pressure. It can also be difficult trying to balance work demands with the commitments you have to provide care and support. Often the level of care needed and the time you need to take away from work can be unpredictable.

Sometimes you may need practical support, such as help around the home. You might qualify for home help services through your local council. It's worth checking, though you may need a health care card or pension card to qualify. Your council may also be able to provide practical help, such as child care or transport, or a disability parking permit.

It is a good idea to speak with your employer about your situation. Discuss what options there may be, for example flexibility around leave arrangements and work hours, and what support programs are available. Some companies have employee assistance programs with work-life counsellors for you to talk to.

There are a number of government and community support services available that provide practical and financial assistance. These services are listed in the 'Information and support' services section at the end of this booklet.

Further information on support services and assistance programs is available in the practical support section of the *Hope & Hurdles Information Guide*. *Hope & Hurdles* can be ordered from bcna.org.au or by calling 1800 500 258.



Specialised support for carers

Who are carers?

Many people living with metastatic breast cancer will have carers in their lives.

A 'carer' is defined as 'someone who provides any "informal" (unpaid) personal care, support and assistance to another person who needs this care because they are older or living with a disability or an illness' (such as breast cancer).

A carer may be a spouse, partner or other family member and may, or may not, be living in the same household as the person receiving care. While you may not think of yourself as a 'carer', you may be able to access some of the carer-specific supports that are available to help people caring for a loved one.

Where to find support as a carer

The Carer Advisory Service provides information and advice to carers and their families about carer supports and services. Visit the Carers Australia website carersaustralia.com.au or call **1800 242 636**.

Carer Gateway is a national service funded by the Australian Government. Carer Gateway includes a website and phone service for carers to access practical information and support. Visit the Carer Gateway website carergateway.gov.au or call **1800 422 737**. Some respite and carer support services are location-based, in particular, Australian Government-supported home care services. The Carer Gateway website provides information about how to access these services.

If you are having difficulties remaining at work because of the demands of your caregiving responsibilities, there are carer payments and other forms of financial assistance that are available. The Department of Human Services supports carers financially and practically through various schemes, including Carer Payment and Carer Allowance. Call **132 717**, visit the Department of Human Services Carer Payments page at humanservices.gov.au or visit your nearest Centrelink office.

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres (CRCCs) provide access to information, respite care and other support appropriate to carers' needs and circumstances and the needs of the people for whom they care. CRCCs provide free and confidential

information on local carer support, disability and community services. Call [1800 052 222](tel:1800052222) during business hours or [1800 059 059](tel:1800059059) for emergency respite support outside of business hours.

Adolescents and young adults are sometimes carers for a parent or sibling with breast cancer. For young people in a carer role, there are additional challenges such as disruption to education. It is important to have opportunities to share the caregiving role with others, or for the young carer to also be cared for by other family members. As a young carer, you may need additional supports to help you. There are services available specifically for young carers, including respite care, financial support, educational support and counselling.

Young Carers Australia provides information and support for young carers, including confidential counselling by telephone. Visit the Young Carers Australia website youngcarers.net.au or call [1800 242 636](tel:1800242636).

Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) partners

LGBT partners have unique needs and concerns in addition to the common concerns that all partners experience. You may worry about how members of the treatment team will respond. You may also be concerned about being excluded from important decisions involving your partner or not being recognised as a partner or carer by health professionals.

Some partners feel that the process of regularly 'coming out' to health professionals is almost as stressful as dealing with their partner's breast cancer diagnosis.

It is helpful to seek care from a medical team who is sensitive to your needs, respects your privacy and encourages you to be involved. The Australian Lesbian Medical Association (ALMA) has a list of health professionals who are recommended by lesbian and bisexual women. Visit almas.org.au for more information.

You might want to talk to other LGBT partners in a carer role. Your local cancer support group or LGBT support services may be able to connect you with others.

You can also find information for same-sex couples through BCNA by visiting bcna.org.au or by calling [1800 500 258](tel:1800500258).

Practical ways to take care of yourself

As a partner, I know this has taken a toll on me. Right through this journey, I've never thought that I may have needed support too. I always had the attitude of 'all will be alright', but nothing could be further from the truth.

Below are some things you can do that may help you to care for yourself and recharge.

Exercise and eat well

Regular exercise, along with a healthy balanced diet, can help reduce stress, give you increased energy and improve your mood. Going for a walk with a friend or joining a club or class is a great way to get out and have time for yourself. Find something you enjoy so exercising doesn't become a chore. Try to include a variety of healthy foods in your diet, cut back on unhealthy food and enjoy the treats you love in moderation.

Make time for yourself

Everyone needs time to relax and enjoy themselves, but it's easy to forget this when things get busy and you're caring for someone else. If you know how to relax, and make an effort to actually relax when you need to, it can be a great coping strategy.

Give yourself time each day to do something for you. This may be seeing a movie, going shopping, keeping up with a hobby or catching up with a friend. A great way to switch off is through exercise – go for a walk, a run or try yoga or Pilates.

There are a lot of forms of relaxation, like walking and sitting quietly, that are really simple to do and don't take much time. Others require more discipline and some training. You may find some strategies for relaxation work better than others. The best thing to do is try out some different things and make the ones that best fit your lifestyle a regular habit.

Why not try mindful meditation?

There are many guided meditation apps available. Smiling Mind and Headspace are popular apps offering guided meditation. To find out more visit [headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com) and [smilingmind.com.au](https://www.smilingmind.com.au).



Sleep

The right type and amount of sleep is vital to stay healthy and function well. Having trouble sleeping is a very common experience.

If you are having problems sleeping, the following strategies may help:

- reduce caffeine, especially late in the day – this includes tea, coffee, chocolate and energy drinks
- establish a routine before you go to bed – for example, go to bed at the same time every night
- make sure your bed and bedroom are comfortable – a bedroom temperature of 16°C – 20°C helps lower core temperature and may help you feel drowsy
- practice good sleep habits – if you're awake for more than 20 minutes, getting up and doing something relaxing, such as reading a book, in another room may help

If these strategies don't improve your sleep, talk to your GP, counsellor, or sleep specialist about what else they can advise.

Take a break

If you find it difficult to find time for yourself when you are caring for someone close to you, ask a family member or friend to help out for a few days so you can take a break. If this is not possible, you may be able to access respite care. Respite care allows people in a carer role to have a break. It can be provided at home as in-home care, through a respite centre or sometimes in a hospital.

Respite care is provided both by private providers (subject to fees) and through government-subsidised packages (cost is lower as fees are subsidised). Respite care can also be location-based, meaning you will need to contact a provider that provides services in your area. You and the person you care for may also need to be assessed to see whether or not you are eligible and to determine the most suitable respite care for your situation.

The Carer Gateway provides more information on available in-home services and respite care.

Visit the Carer Gateway website [carergateway.gov.au](https://www.carergateway.gov.au) or call 1800 422 737.

Palliative care

Palliative care is care that helps people with a life-limiting or terminal illness to live as well and as comfortably as possible. It is important for you to know that palliative care services are a good source of help and support for family members and friends too. Palliative care provides a model of care that focuses on the whole family.

Palliative Care Australia has information on palliative care, including information for partners and family members. For more information visit palliativecare.org.au

Ask for help

Many people find it hard to ask for support when they may need it most. You may pull back from people and find asking for help difficult. Many people want to help, but they may not know what they can do or how to offer help. It is okay to suggest to others what may be helpful for you. Remember that getting help for yourself can also help the person you are supporting.

The lessons I have learnt from a carer's perspective are to look after yourself, see your GP regularly, and get your life as close to normality as possible. Don't ignore the warning signs and get the support you need both mentally and physically to help you live your life with your family to the fullest.

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres provide free and confidential information on local carer support services and respite options. Call **1800 052 222** or visit dss.gov.au to find out more.



Further information and support

Breast Cancer Network Australia

BCNA's website (bcna.org.au) has information for people with metastatic breast cancer, along with links to other trusted sources of information.

BCNA Helpline

BCNA's Helpline provides support and information about breast cancer for women and men living with breast cancer and their family members and friends. The Helpline team can provide you with written information about breast cancer and related issues that might be concerning you. They can also talk to you about general concerns that you may be experiencing and can refer you to a wide range of supports available to assist you. You can contact the Helpline team on **1800 500 258** between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm (EST) Monday, Wednesday and Friday and between 9.00 am and 9.00 pm on Tuesday and Thursday. You can also contact BCNA by email on contact@bcna.org.au.

Online network

BCNA has an online network where you can share your thoughts and feelings online, if you think talking with others in a similar situation will help. There is an active public discussion area for anyone affected by breast cancer as well as family, friends and supporters. Join the online network if you'd like to connect with others in a similar situation bcna.org.au/onlinenetwork.

Information and support services

Carer Gateway

Carer Gateway is a national service funded by the Australian Government. Carer Gateway includes a website and phone service for carers to access practical information and support.

Visit carergateway.gov.au or call **1800 422 737**.

Carers Australia

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia's carers. The Carer Advisory Service provides information and advice to carers and their families about carer supports and services.

Visit carersaustralia.com.au or call **1800 242 636**.

Young Carers Australia

Young Carers Australia provides information and support for young carers, including confidential counselling by telephone.

Visit youngcarers.net.au or call 1800 242 636.

Cancer Council

Cancer Council has a free, confidential telephone information and support service in each state and territory. Anyone can call Cancer Council – people diagnosed with cancer, their families, carers and friends, as well as teachers, students and healthcare professionals.

Cancer Council also provides online support through Cancer Connections, an online community where you can ask questions and participate in groups, forums and blogs.

Visit cancer.org.au or call 13 11 20.

Cancer Australia

Cancer Australia's website has a section for partners of women with breast cancer, which was written for male partners but is helpful to all partners, family and friends of women with metastatic breast cancer.

Visit canceraustralia.gov.au.

beyondblue

beyondblue has information on depression and anxiety, and where to get help.

Visit beyondblue.org.au or call 1300 224 636.

CanTeen

CanTeen is an organisation that helps young people (aged 12 - 24) deal with cancer in their family. This includes information and support for those who have a parent diagnosed with cancer. Young people can also connect with others in a similar situation and share their stories so they know they are not alone.

Visit canteen.org.au.



Palliative Care Australia

Palliative Care Australia is the national peak body for palliative care. It aims to improve access to, and promote the need for, palliative care. Palliative Care Australia provides access to resources, advance care planning resources, information for carers and a directory of services (searchable by category or postcode).

Visit palliativecare.org.au or phone (02) 6232 4433.

PalAssist

PalAssist is a no-cost 24-hour telephone and online service for palliative care patients, carers, family and friends in Queensland seeking practical information and emotional support. It includes an online chat facility.

Visit palassist.org.au or phone 1800 772 273.

Information and support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities

Australian Lesbian Medical Association (ALMA)

ALMA provides a list of health professionals who are recommended by lesbian and bisexual women.

Visit almas.org.au.

The National LGBTI Health Alliance

Provides information on organisations and individuals that provide health-related programs and services focused on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people (LGBTI) and other sexuality, gender, and bodily diverse people and communities.

Visit lgbtihealth.org.au or call (02) 8568 1123.

Qlife

Qlife is a national counselling and referral service for people of diverse sex, genders and sexualities. Qlife also provides online chat (3.00 pm – 12.00 am daily).

Visit qlife.org.au or call 1800 184 527.

ACON (NSW)

ACON is a NSW-based organisation that promotes the health and wellbeing of members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. ACON provides support to women with cancer who are in same-sex partnerships.

Visit acon.org.au or call 1800 063 060.

Switchboard Victoria Inc (Vic)

Switchboard Victoria Inc is a community-based not-for-profit organisation that provides a peer-based, volunteer-run support service for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) people and their friends, families and allies.

Switchboard also runs the social support service for older LGBTQI Victorians called Out & About.

Visit switchboard.org.au or call 1800 184 527.

Living Proud Inc (WA)

Living Proud Inc (formerly Gay & Lesbian Community Services of WA Inc) provides support, information and resources to the Western Australian gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex community, including a peer counselling phone line, and health and wellbeing initiatives.

Visit livingproud.org.au or call (08) 9486 9855.

Information and support services for culturally and linguistically diverse carers

State and territory carer associations offer a range of translation services, information and support for carers from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

Visit carersaustralia.com.au or call 1800 242 636.

Counselling services

Lifeline Australia

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to free, 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Visit lifeline.org.au or call 13 11 14.

Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, confidential, 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged up to 25 years old.

Visit kidshelpline.com.au or call 1800 55 1800.

Relationships Australia

Relationships Australia offers relationship counselling as well as other counselling services. Most of the counselling services are face-to-face, but there are also some online and telephone counselling services for people in remote areas (in some states only).

Visit relationships.org.au or call 1300 364 277.

MensLine Australia

MensLine Australia is a professional telephone and online support and information service for Australian men.

Visit mensline.org.au or call 1300 789 978.

Carers Australia National Carer Counselling Program

The National Carer Counselling Program provides short-term counselling and emotional and psychological support services for carers. The counselling helps lower carer stress and improve carer coping skills. The counselling program is delivered through state and territory carer associations.

To find out more visit carersaustralia.com.au or call 1800 242 636.

Financial and practical assistance

The Department of Human Services (Centrelink)

The Department of Human Services supports carers financially and practically through various schemes, including Mobility Allowance, Carer Payment, Carer Allowance, and Sickness Allowance.

Visit humanservices.gov.au/centrelink, call 132 717 or visit your nearest Centrelink office.

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres (CRCCs) provide access to information, respite care and other support appropriate to carers' needs and circumstances, and the needs of the people they care for. CRCCs provide free and confidential information on local carer support, disability and community services.

Call 1800 052 222 during business hours or 1800 059 059 for emergency respite support outside of business hours.

Help in the home

Some local councils provide a range of community and in-home services, such as Meals on Wheels or respite care. Call your local council to find out more information about what is available locally.

Independent Living Centres Australia

Independent Living Centres Australia offers advice on a range of products and services to help with aspects of day-to-day living, including mobility, sleeping, eating and transport.

Visit ilcaustralia.org.au or call 1300 885 886.

National Debt Helpline

National Debt Helpline is a not-for-profit service that helps people with debt problems. The professional financial counsellors offer a free, independent and confidential service.

Visit ndh.org.au or call 1800 007 007.





training

Twilight
BAY RUN
WYNNUM 2015

5KM
RUNWALK

5351

Start Zone
Orange

Twilight
Wynnum 2015
HALF
MARATHON

82

intraining

cc:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

CC:9

Acknowledgements

Breast Cancer Network Australia thanks the women and men with metastatic breast cancer and their supporters who shared their personal experiences, stories and photos for this booklet.

Breast Cancer Network Australia
293 Camberwell Road
Camberwell Vic 3124 Australia

1800 500 258
(03) 9805 2500
contact@bcna.org.au
bcna.org.au



Breast
Cancer
Network
Australia



Breast Cancer Network Australia

293 Camberwell Rd
Camberwell VIC 3124

1800 500 258

bcna.org.au