

“What is a Navigator and Why Every Patient Needs One”

An Educational Tool for Breast Cancer Patients in collaboration with LBBC

What Is a Navigator?

Navigation is the process of helping patients overcome healthcare system barriers and providing them with the timely access to quality medical and psychosocial care from before cancer diagnosis through all phases of their cancer experience

Navigator, Nurse, Social Worker: What’s the Difference?

- **Patient Navigator:** Paid professional who serves as a broker between the patient and healthcare system. The patient navigator is a primary point of contact for the patient and works with other members of the care team to coordinate care for the patient.
- **Nurse Navigator:** Clinically trained individual responsible for identification and removal of barriers to timely and appropriate cancer treatment. They guide the patient through the cancer care continuum from diagnosis through survivorship.
- **Nurse:** Nursing encompasses independent and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups, and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of the ailing.
- **Social Worker:** Social worker with oncology-specific clinical knowledge who assists the patient and family members with information on internal and external resources, addressing financial, practical, and emotional concerns during the cancer journey.

What Does a Navigator Do?

- Identifies and removes barriers to care
- Educates patients and caregivers on their cancer journey and what to expect with treatment
- Protects patients’ rights and wishes
- Promotes equal access to care
- Organizes patient care activities and sharing information among all healthcare members to help achieve safer, more effective care
- Assists patients in receiving gold standard of care
- Provides psychosocial resources and support
- Helps patients communicate with their healthcare team

Why Should I Ask for a Navigator?

- Improved quality of life and care satisfaction
- Better understanding of your treatment plan
- More access to cancer screening = earlier detection rates = better outcomes
- Decrease in missed diagnostic follow-up appointments
- Improved communication among healthcare team
- Increased participation in cancer treatment decision-making



Where Can I Find a Navigator and When to Ask for One?

Navigation has continued to evolve in a variety of settings including ambulatory, outpatient, inpatient, rural, community, and academic institutions. If you are not assigned a navigator at the time of diagnosis, ask your oncology medical team for an assigned navigator who specializes in cancer care coordination. The earlier you are assigned a navigator, the sooner you will have the benefits of navigation during your journey.

Resources

Living Beyond Breast Cancer

<https://www.lbbc.org>

Helpline: (888) 753-5222

AONN+

<https://aonnonline.org/>

<https://conquer-magazine.com/video-library-categories/from-your-navigator>

American Cancer Society

<https://www.cancer.org>



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Nurse & Patient Navigators

