

Breakout session

**LIVING BEYOND
BREAST CANCER®**

Hosted in partnership with Project Life

Integrative oncology

Tending the inner self — a writing workshop

Facilitator: April Johnson Stearns, Wildfire Journal

Panelists: Nikoo Kafi McGoldrick and Melinda Feola-Mahar, PhD



Integrative Oncology: Tending the Inner Self

A Writing Workshop

April Stearns, Nikoo Kafi McGoldrick, and Abigail Johnston, JD



Project Life

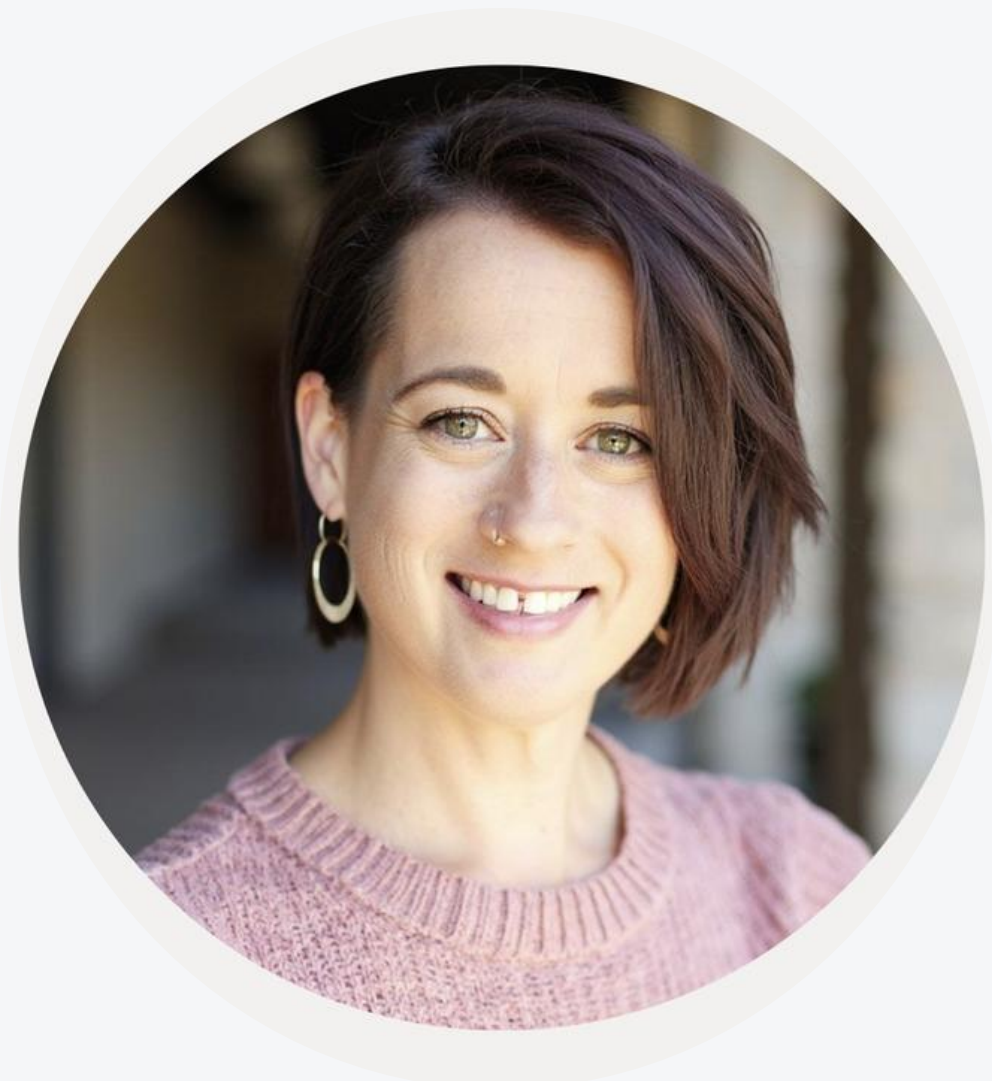


A virtual wellness house for those living with metastatic breast cancer and their loved ones.



www.projectlifembc.com

Panel Discussion
Writing From the Heart



April Stearns



Nikoo Kafi McGoldrick



Abigail Johnston, JD



Expressive Writing

- Personal, emotional writing without grammar concerns
- Focuses on feelings over facts
- Shifts perspective: from inside the trauma to observer of the story
- Gives language to experiences – reduces rumination
- Decreases anxiety, blood pressure, depression, muscle tension, pain and stress
- Enhances lung and immune function
- Improves memory, sleep quality and social life



“Rules” for Expressive Writing



- Write the whole time
- Don't edit yourself – let it be stream of consciousness
- Lists are writing, too



Writing Prompts

**What my medical file
won't tell you...**

**If I could write a note in the
margin of your medical chart, it
would say...**

OR

**What standing beside you
through this has taught me is...**



Writing Prompt

In uncertain times, I'm learning to be a person who...



“There is no way to truly prepare a young family for your own death. Over the years we’ve had together, I think I’ve instilled my values and shown my love through physical items like quilts, personal and meaningful contributions from my writing, and demonstrating the importance of standing up for causes that I believe in through advocacy of all kinds. And, that has to be enough.”

– Ann Camden

Writing was one of Ann’s biggest joys. She was a frequent participant in Project Life and Wildfire Journal workshops.

Ann passed away in 2024.



Project Life



A virtual wellness house for those living with metastatic breast cancer and their loved ones.

projectlifembc.com



A literary journal and writing community focused on memoir and expressive writing for those diagnosed under 50.

wildfirecommunity.org