


## Supporting the Unique Needs of BMT Caregivers: Caregiver's Companion Program


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Panel of caregivers:  
Sarah, Scott and Sherri



## Learning Objectives

- At the end of this workshop, you will be able to :
  - Understand the unique experiences and needs of BMT caregivers
  - Identify tools and resources available to support caregivers during their caregiving experience
  - Learn about the Caregiver's Companion Program offered by the NMDP Patient and Health Professional Department




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## Uncovering the Need

- Original research on quality of life of BMT patients and spouses found that many caregivers were impacted physically, emotionally, and socially by the experience—long after transplant was over
- Studies also indicate that many BMT caregivers have significant informational needs and may have inaccurate expectations about the length of BMT recovery and may tend to neglect their own physical and mental health needs while caring for the patient

– Bishop, et al., *J Clin Oncol* 25:1403-1411. © 2007




Jody, caregiver



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## Question 1


- Does your center have a standard process to screen caregivers for emotional and physical distress as part of the patient history?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
  - C. Unsure



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## Question 2

- What are the signs of distress in caregivers that you look for?
  - A. Anxiety
  - B. Depression
  - C. Difficulty focusing
  - D. Weight change
  - E. All of the above \*\*\*





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## BMT Caregiver Experience

- Sarah, mother and primary caregiver for her son Alex who had his transplant in June 2012
- Scott, husband and caregiver to Victoria who had her transplant in 2008
- Sherri, mother and primary caregiver for her son TJ who had his transplant in November 2013

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### Question 3

- What resources does your center offer for caregivers?
  - A. Support groups
  - B. Massage
  - C. Exercise room
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None

### Caregiver's Companion Program



Allison, wife and caregiver to Sean

- Developed to address the specific challenges of BMT caregivers so they can respond better to the challenges and demands of everyday life
- Supplements the care provided by transplant center staff to help support caregivers through the BMT process
- Combines the confidential support of a Be The Match caregiver coach with a toolkit that helps caregivers acquire or enhance self-care behaviors

### Program Components

- A caregiver coach provides ongoing telephone support
- The caregiver toolkit includes:
  - The Caregiver's Companion book (introduction and six modules)
  - A wellness journal
  - Tote bag, water bottle and pedometer



### Caregiver Coaches

- Be The Match Patient Services Coordinators
  - Understand transplant and the caregiver role
  - Experienced in providing support to patients and caregivers



### Coaching Sessions

- Coach works with caregiver to schedule 6 telephone sessions (about once per week)
- Coach will:
  - Listen and provide self-care tips
  - Refer to specific information in the toolkit that will help caregiver with what they are facing that week

*"The chance to 'download' with someone who cares and understands, yet who is totally objective, was very helpful."*

– Program participant



### Optimal Time for Referral

- Caregivers should be actively caring for an adult (18 and over) BMT patient
- Best when referred to the program at work-up or discharge
- Most beneficial to participants when caregiver is actively engaged in the care and living with the patient
- Caregivers should be willing and available to talk once a week by phone with a coach



### Question 4

- What is the greatest benefit for caregivers to participate in the Caregiver's Companion Program?
  - A. They receive a pedometer and water bottle
  - B. One to One support
  - C. Decrease stress
  - D. Increase coping skills
  - E. They get a nifty bag

### Questions



### For More Information

- Resources are available online at the Be The Match website: [BeTheMatch.org/Companion](http://BeTheMatch.org/Companion)
- Email: [patientinfo@nmdp.org](mailto:patientinfo@nmdp.org)
- Phone: 1-888-999-6743

Resources  
for you!

### References

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