



Media One

Facing Ovarian Cancer

Transcript for chapter 3 of 4: Care and support

Lisle (Age 74, diagnosed 10 years ago. Stage 2) - The support of everyone was very important. And one thing that I did do: I told everyone. I didn't want anyone to be embarrassed, not knowing what to say. I told everyone that I had ovarian cancer and their support was invaluable to me. It didn't matter if they were in New York or London or Melbourne or Sydney. It was just... they supported me all along the track.

Daphne (diagnosed 5 years ago. Stage 3) - When I was diagnosed and I went into my lock-down period, I'll never forget the kindness that I was shown. The simplest things. People that would ring and leave a very kind message. People would send cards. They would just let me know that they were thinking of me. You know, if I'd see them in the street they'd touch me - they'd come up and they would very gently touch me. That was so beautiful, it meant so much. It was such a lovely thing to know that there are people who care. And you don't have to tell them what's going on - they know. It was just a really beautiful thing. And I think for anyone that hears that someone has got cancer, and what do you do - just a phone call, just a very quick, "Hi, I'm thinking of you. Wishing you all the best." It really can mean the world.

Julie (age 41, diagnosed 2 years ago. Stage 4) - You want them to treat you normal but you also want them to show you a bit of empathy. If they say, "Let me know if I can do anything," then... well we don't like to ask for people's help. I would prefer that friends would just come up and say, "I've just come to get all of your ironing. I'm going to take your ironing home and do it." Or, "Here's seven night's dinners," and even write their names on the tupperware containers so that we know who owns what. Instead of saying, "Is there anything I can do? Let me know", actually get in there and say, "This is what I'm doing." Come around and mow the lawn. You know, ring up and say, "I'll take the children for a day." But we're all new at this game. I guess as time goes along, a lot of friends fall by the wayside too. I've lost many friends because they just don't know what to say.

Daphne - At these really critical stages in life, you have to look at who you have in your life, and what they bring. And are they helping you, or are they not helping you? And I had to make some very, very hard decisions about who was going to be part of my survival and who wasn't. And that, I honestly believe, was a big part of me getting to the other side.

Julie - I basically shut down as a person. I kept a small inner circle of friends and they were my support. But, you know, Pete fielded all the calls from everybody, but I only wanted to keep in contact with very few people. I guess when you're in this situation you don't know what you'd do - would you have a party or would you want to have a bit of privacy? I'm quite a private person and I just felt like I needed to be left alone and just get the support I needed to have from the few friends that I chose.

Daphne - It comes back to what I say about how you have to pick the right people to be on your team to help you get over it. I had people around me that made me want to live, that gave me so many reasons to get beyond this experience and live and have fun, and you



know, put it in its box and bury it. And that's what's been done and I'm so blessed. My sister, for example... we tried to make it fun, which probably sounds ridiculous. She'd come with me to every blood test, every chemotherapy treatment, she would come with me. And I couldn't eat for ten days thereafter because I just felt so sick, so she would make these huge lunches and these huge hampers with these treats and we'd laugh and giggle and talk about all of the fun things that have happened in our lives. It was great for us to actually spend so much time together because the chemo treatments for me were... like, they took six or seven hours for it all to go through. So we had fun as best as we could have fun.

Sharyn (age 49, diagnosed 1 year ago. Stage 3) - My partner Rob, it has been very hard on him -I think it's hard on all partners - to deal with it. He has been very supportive. I've had a great network of friends who have supported me as well, and supported him which has been good. He has helped me through all of the chemo. You need a carer to help you through it, whether it be a partner or my mum also did a lot of carer's work because Rob did night duty, or night shift. So he would be away all night and sleeping during the day.

Peter (Wife Julie diagnosed 2 years ago. Stage 4) - I initially kept working. Although it was hard, I felt horrible getting up and going to work as normal while Julie was here with the kids and coping with what she was just told. I done it for a few months, and then when the first-line chemo didn't seem to be doing anything and we were getting more bad news, Julie just said to me, "You're just going to have to stop work." I literally stopped work overnight. I said that whatever time there is, I don't want to be working.

Margaret (age 65, diagnosed 2 years ago. Stage 3) - Having my daughter around. She took some time off work to make sure that my needs were met, and also if she couldn't be around, she made sure that there was something in place - that I could have a backup. And then I finally had nursing assistance come in which made it a lot easier.

Peter - Some days I just basically do everything. You know, the children, I tend to the children, meals, washing, a bit of cleaning (not too much), but I just do what I can do.

Julie - He has been just absolutely wonderful. He knows the exact routine now. We used to talk about when he used to work and I was always the housewife. You know, we'd joke about what a cushy life housewives have got, and what do you do all day? And now he certainly knows that it's not like that at all. He has just done everything that he's had to do without complaining - looked after the boys, looked after me, tried to keep the family on track, and I know that if anything ever happens to me, I know that he would keep the family going. He's been really wonderful.