Dealing With Survivor State of Mind

Navigating the psychosocial effects that can outlast cancer and its treatment.

Also inside

- Survivor-Specific Exercise Programs
- How to Navigate Returning to Work Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Portraits with Purpose: Survivors Share Messages of Inspiration
- Serve Up Sweet and Savory Dishes
is proud to be partners with a number of leading advocacy groups across the country, giving them national reach and visibility for their cutting edge initiatives, programs, content, research and thought leadership.
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ALTHOUGH THE HEIGHT OF the COVID-19 pandemic is behind us, uncertainty still fills the air. Will there be another round of the virus this winter? Or have the months of staying home, social distancing and mask wearing pushed us to an almost new normal where we can safely dine indoors, get back to the office, gather inside places of worship and throw parties with family and friends?

Cancer survivors already know what it’s like to live a new normal. They’ve done that since diagnosis. To them, social distancing isn’t an unfamiliar burden. It’s what they have always done to keep themselves safe and healthy.

But being that many are immunocompromised from treatment and the disease itself, survivors likely need to take even stronger precautions while navigating a world where COVID-19 is present.

This fall, offices began to reopen, leaving employees unsettled, especially survivors and caregivers. Within these pages, Triage Cancer, a national nonprofit organization that provides education on the practical and legal issues that may affect people diagnosed with cancer, lays out laws created to protect individuals heading back to work. Be prepared, ask questions and know your rights.

Our cover story digs deeper into the psychosocial and physical lasting effects of cancer, from anxiety and depression to infertility and guilt, which some survivors feel for potentially passing the disease onto their children. Five survivors walk us through their lives post-cancer and share how they’re dealing with a survivor state of mind.

A childhood cancer survivor fulfills a lifelong dream to inspire others through the new book “Beyond Remission: Words of Advice for Thriving.” Melody Lomboy-Lowe and her niece spent two years interviewing and photographing survivors from across the country, then editing it to create something to inspire hope in those who need it most. After receiving an acute lymphoblastic leukemia diagnosis at age 6, Lomboy-Lowe spent years in and out of treatment followed by scans into her adult life. But through it all she has managed to see the beauty in life by focusing on the motto “Don’t waste time.”

Also inside: opioid use in survivors, how COVID-19 affected breast cancer survivors and easy-to-make sweet and savory meals.

We hope you find both practical information and everyday inspiration, and, as always, thank you for reading.

MIKE HENNESSY SR.
Chairman and Founder
What You Need to Know About Returning to Work During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Businesses are reopening offices, leaving unanswered questions for employees who have cancer or take care of someone who does.

BY JOANNA FAWZY MORALES, ESQ.

AFTER MONTHS OF WORKING from home or not working at all, employees across the United States are being asked to return to the workplace for the first time since the country essentially shut down because of COVID-19. People who have cancer or who are a caregiver to a patient with cancer may question what options they have.

INDIVIDUALS RIGHTS
Employers are required under federal law to make sure workplaces are safe. State and local rules, such as social distancing, spacing of work stations, requiring masks, taking employee temperatures and asking employees to self-report illnesses, may also be in place. Some employers may have additional policies.

However, these precautions may still leave employees concerned. Before figuring out which laws apply, each individual must consider their needs.

1. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Reasonable Accommodations: If someone’s goal is to continue working, they should check if there are reasonable accommodations available under the ADA or state fair employment law. For example, a change in a person’s workspace, such as telecommuting from home or working from a different location, is a potential reasonable accommodation. Other examples include access to protective equipment or changes in job responsibilities.

2. Paid Time Off: If a person has any paid time off (sick or vacation time), they may consider using that benefit. But it’s crucial to remember this time off is not usually job protected.


   EPSLA provides two weeks of paid sick leave for employees who are unable to work or telework if:
   - The employee is quarantined.
   - A doctor advises the employee to self-quarantine.
   - The employee has COVID-19 symptoms and is waiting for a diagnosis.
   - The employee is caring for an individual under quarantine or medical self-quarantine.
   - The employee is caring for a child whose school or place of child care is closed or unavailable due to COVID-19.

   The Department of Labor has clarified that individuals who have been advised to self-quarantine because they have been exposed to COVID-19, or are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 and quarantining themselves based upon that advice, are prevented from working (or teleworking). Under the act, paid sick leave does not apply to individuals who decide to self-quarantine for an illness without medical advice, even if they have COVID-19 symptoms.

4. Emergency Family & Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA) through the FFCRA
If someone is unable to work or telework because they have a minor child whose school or place of child care has closed because of COVID-19, they may be eligible for up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave (10 weeks are paid leave).

5. Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) & ADA:
FMLA provides eligible employees with time off for their own serious medical condition or as a caregiver of a spouse, parent or child. However, the individual’s medical condition must prevent them from being able to work. It is not enough to say that they fear getting COVID-19. An individual’s health care team can help them document any side effects from treatment, including a compromised immune system, and explain why these side effects keep them from being able to work. If someone does not qualify for FMLA leave, they may be able to take time off work as a reasonable accommodation, if eligible under the ADA or state fair employment law.
6. If an employer has let an individual go for not returning to work, they may qualify for unemployment.
Unemployment benefits and rules are different in each state, although the federal government has expanded benefits due to COVID-19.

CAREGIVER BENEFITS
1. Are you entitled to reasonable accommodations?
No. Under the ADA, caregivers are not entitled to reasonable accommodations. However, they may still ask their employer for accommodations.

2. Can you qualify for the new paid sick leave (EPSLA)?
Maybe, if you are caring for a minor child whose school or child care facility is closed. Also, you may qualify if you are caring for an individual who is self-quarantining because a health care provider has advised that individual to quarantine because they may have COVID-19 or the individual is particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 and providing that care prevents them from working or teleworking.

3. Can you qualify for the new paid family leave (EFMLEA)?
Maybe, if you are caring for a minor child whose school or child care facility is closed, and other caregivers are not available.

4. Can you qualify for original FMLA leave?
Maybe, if you are eligible for FMLA leave as a caregiver of a seriously ill child, parent or spouse.

5. Can you qualify for unemployment if your employer lets you go for not returning to work?
It is unclear if caregivers concerned about exposing a family member to COVID-19 who leave their jobs or do not return to work would be eligible for unemployment benefits. State unemployment agencies have been looking at these situations on an individual basis.

At the time of publishing, this was the most accurate information regarding COVID-19 and laws protecting patients with cancer and caregivers.

LEARN MORE ONLINE
For more information about these employment rights and other cancer-related legal and practical issues, including state-specific details, visit TriageCancer.org.

PROTECTIONS & BENEFITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Individual with a diagnosis of cancer, with compromised immune system</th>
<th>Caregiver of individual with a diagnosis of cancer, with compromised immune system</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer-specific benefits</td>
<td>Maybe. Check employer policies.</td>
<td>Maybe. Check employer policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA/State Fair Employment Law</td>
<td>Yes. Eligible employees are entitled, unless undue hardship on employer.</td>
<td>No. Not entitled but can ask.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable accommodations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMLA/State FMLA Law</td>
<td>Yes. Eligible employees are entitled.</td>
<td>Yes. Eligible employees are entitled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPSLA</td>
<td>Maybe, with doctor’s recommendation of quarantine or</td>
<td>Maybe, if caregiver of individual with doctor’s recommendation of quarantine and caregiving duties prevents work/telework or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, if caring for a minor child at home whose school or child care facility is closed and no other caregivers available.</td>
<td>Yes, if caring for a minor child at home whose school or child care facility is closed and no other caregivers available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFMLEA</td>
<td>Yes, if caring for a minor child at home whose school or child care facility is closed and no other caregivers available.</td>
<td>Yes, if caring for a minor child at home whose school or child care facility is closed and no other caregivers available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded Federal Unemployment (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance)</td>
<td>Yes, with doctor’s recommendation of quarantine</td>
<td>Maybe, with doctor’s recommendation of quarantine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>