

Culturally-Relevant Support for Young Women Facing Breast Cancer

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About Sharsheret

Sharsheret, Hebrew for “chain”, is a national not-for-profit organization supporting young women and their families, of all Jewish backgrounds, facing breast cancer. Our mission is to offer a community of support to women diagnosed with breast cancer or at increased genetic risk, by fostering culturally-relevant individualized connections with networks of peers, health professionals, and related resources.

Sharsheret supports young Jewish women and families facing breast cancer at every stage - before, during, and after diagnosis. We help women and families connect to our community in the way that feels most comfortable, taking into consideration their stage of life, diagnosis, or treatment, as well as their connection to Judaism. We also provide educational resources, offer specialized support to those facing ovarian cancer or at high risk of developing cancer, and create programs for women and families to improve their quality of life. All of Sharsheret’s programs are open to all men and women without regard to age, race, religion or nationality.



SHARSHERET

Understanding the Issues

- 1 in 40 Jewish women of Ashkenazi descent carries a mutation in the BRCA1/2 gene
- Compared to 1 in 345 mutation carriers in the general population
- BRCA mutation carriers may have as high as an 80% lifetime risk of developing breast cancer and a 44% risk of developing ovarian cancer

Sharsheret's Response

- Launched 10 national programs in 10 years
- Responded to more than 23,000 inquiries
- Continue to partner with local Jewish and cancer organizations to create community for young Jewish women and families facing breast and ovarian cancer nationwide



Supporting Young Women

Assessing the Need:

- Focus groups to identify core needs
- Data tracking to identify common concerns
- Event-specific surveys
- Online annual surveys



Supporting Young Women

Designing the Programs:

- Convenient and accessible
- Reflect the target audience
- Focus groups to test program specifics



Supporting Young Women

Marketing the Programs:

- Social Media
- “Listening” to bloggers
- Finding young women where they are
- Partnerships with other health and cancer organizations



Culturally-Sensitive Peer Support

Connecting women newly diagnosed or at high risk of developing breast cancer with others who share similar diagnoses, culture, and life experiences.

- Matches based on age, religious affiliation, marital status, family, stage of diagnosis, surgery, treatment
- Sensitivity to confidentiality and core Jewish values



Genetics For Life Program

Addressing hereditary breast and ovarian cancer

- Genetic Counselor Hotline
- Genetics for Life seminar: “*Understanding Our Past, Guarding Our Future*”
- *Breast Cancer Genetics and the Jewish Woman* resource booklet



Embrace Program

Culturally-sensitive resources and support for women with advanced stage or metastatic breast cancer

- One-on-one counseling sessions with Sharsheret's Clinical Supervisor
- Bi-monthly telephone-based support groups



Family Focus

Support for family members and caregivers of young women facing breast cancer

- Online and print Information and resources
- Ask Sharsheret Hotline through diagnosis, treatment, and beyond



Busy Box

For parents with young children facing breast cancer

- Age- and gender-appropriate activities for children
- Parenting resources for adults of young children and teenagers



SHARSHERET

Best Face Forward

Addresses the cosmetic side effects of chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

- Information and resources for young women
- Skin care products



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Sharsheret on Campus

- Action: More than 72 colleges and universities nationwide host annual breast cancer awareness events for Sharsheret.
- Result: Sharsheret educates thousands of young men and women about the risks of hereditary breast and ovarian cancer in Jewish families, and the risk of breast cancer in young women.



Culturally-Relevant Resource Series

- *Facing Breast Cancer as a Jewish Woman*
- *Facing Breast Cancer as an Orthodox Jewish Woman*
- *Breast Cancer Genetics and the Jewish Woman*
- *The Jewish Family Facing Breast Cancer*
- *Our Voices: Inspiring Words From the Women of Sharsheret*
- *Guide for Mikvah Attendants*
- *Facing Ovarian Cancer as a Jewish Woman*



Sharsheret Supports Program

- Action: Sharsheret assists community and lay leaders in establishing or enhancing local culturally-sensitive support groups and breast cancer programs for young women.
- Result: More than 15 local breast cancer programs established in communities identified with significant Jewish breast cancer populations.



Connect with Sharsheret

- Toll-free national hotline: 866 474 2774
- www.sharsheret.org
- Blog: www.sharsheret.blogspot.com
- Facebook and Twitter
- YouTube

