

# Ascension Wisconsin Cancer Survivorship Program

***Rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer, Ascension Wisconsin (AW) is committed to serving all people, with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable. AW Cancer Care is accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC) as an Integrated Network Cancer Program and the recipient of the American Community Cancer Centers Innovation Award. Our cancer centers in Southeast Wisconsin are also accredited by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC). Specifically, Ascension Wisconsin Survivorship Program is dedicated to empowering and enabling cancer patients to live their best lives, along the care continuum. This is manifested through implementing a comprehensive set of services and programs for cancer survivors that includes "the physical, psychosocial and economic issues of cancer, from diagnosis until the end of life."***

**YOGA CONNECTION PROGRAM**


**OBJECTIVE:**

Expand current yoga connection program from only our SE Wisconsin-Mayfair Road location to Ascension All Saints Cancer Center and Ascension NE Wisconsin Hospital-St. Elizabeth Campus. These classes are designed for cancer survivors at any stage and, if desired, a support person. The yoga sessions will include: gentle stretching to improve range of motion, guided meditation and breathwork, low impact and restorative poses, and relaxation techniques.

**BACKGROUND:**

Benefits for cancer survivors:

- Reduce anxiety, depression and stress, improving mental health, distress, and quality of life
- Increase social interaction within the community
- Improve biomarkers (cortisol regulation and inflammatory markers)
- Manage noncancer comorbidity conditions, i.e arthritis, cardiovascular disease
- By increasing physical activity, participants can improve flexibility and physical strength
- Improve sleep and energy
- Improvement in lymphedema
- Educate and practice mindfulness
- Improve confidence and body image

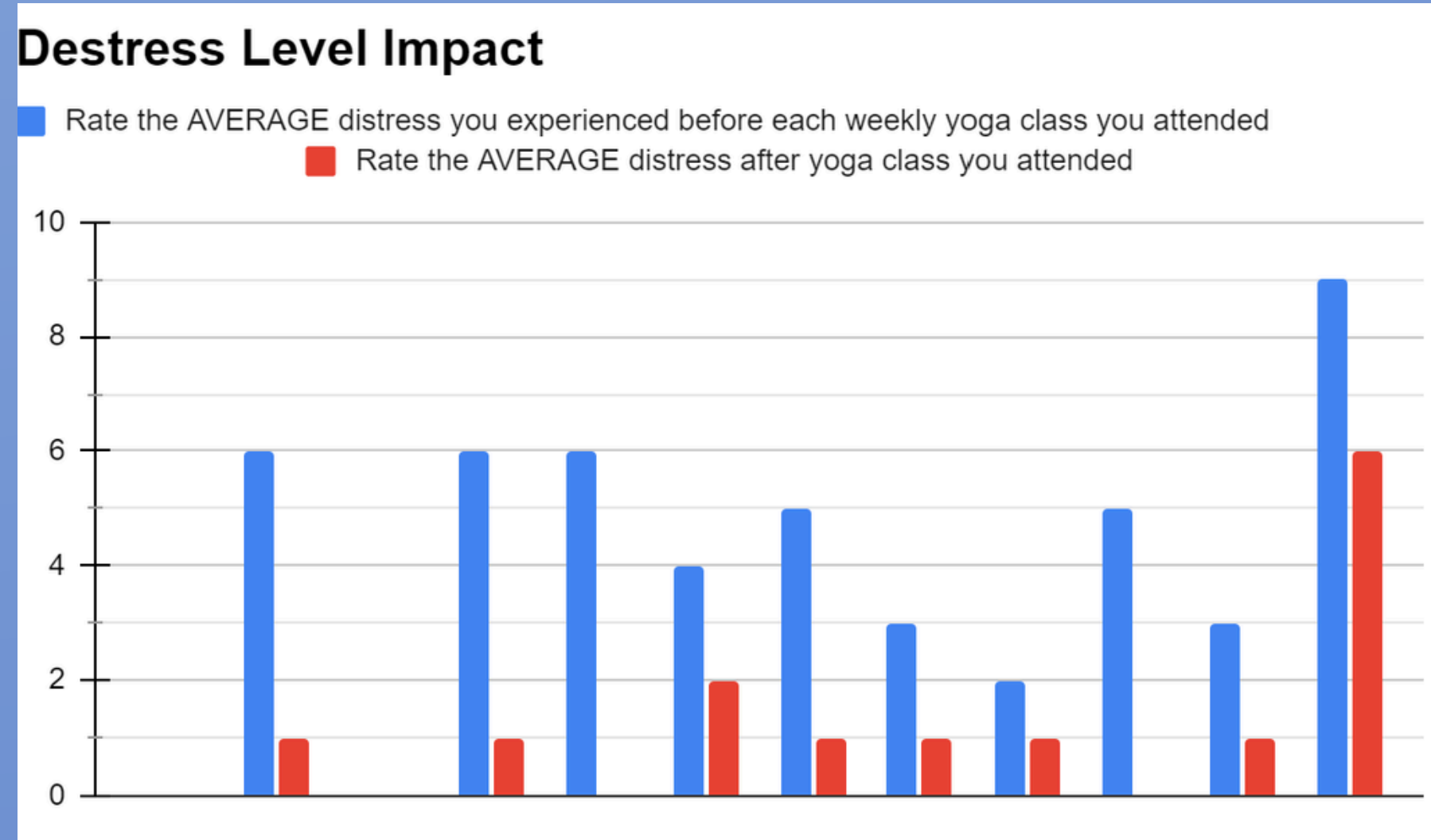


**TOP ACTIONS STEPS:**

- Gather programmatic information on current program
- Applied and received a \$5,900 grant from Ascension Wisconsin Foundation to fund expansion
- Determine on-site support and yoga4cancer certified instructors for each site
- Set up new yoga4cancer instructors as suppliers/vendors
- Legal: Creation of participation waiver
- Purchase of new equipment (yoga mats, blocks, Bluetooth speakers, etc.)
- Determine class/dates and book rooms for each session
- Regfox Registration set up with linking to AW Survivorship Landing page
- Creation of a post-evaluation

**RESULTS/CURRENT STATUS:**

- Four 8-week sessions, one hour a week
- Received about 2k in donations from participants
- Average participants
  - Racine: 7 participants
  - Appleton: 3 participants
  - Wauwatosa: 14 participant
- Reported comments:
  - "I've been practicing yoga for years, but going through this program has helped me to make connections with other cancer survivors in the classes over the years. This program has encouraged me to continue my yoga journey as well as get certified as an instructor."
  - "I am moving better with less pain and stiffness and have developed an increase feeling of wellbeing"
  - "I am so happy I signed up for the class. It's more than just a yoga class! It combines physical, emotional social and educational components. They are SO helpful in navigating through a cancer journey."
- We asked participants to rate average distress before and after each weekly yoga class



- 100% stated they would recommend yoga connection
- Fiscal year 2025, we received continued funding by Ascension Foundation

**HEALTHY EATING ACTIVE LIVING(HEAL) PROGRAM PILOT**

**OBJECTIVE:**

Create a pilot program for breast cancer survivors to be educated on how healthy eating and active living can prevent cancer recurrence and enhance cancer survivors' quality of life. The HEAL program is a free ten week program for breast cancer survivors that consists of health education, nutrition counseling and exercise classes from a registered dietitian and an oncology registered nurse/certified cancer exercise specialist.

**BACKGROUND:**

- Physical activity is safe and an important before, during and after treatment.
- Both completed and active cancer treatment patients are able to participate
  - Evidence showing markedly reduced physical activity and healthy eating choices between pre-diagnosis and during breast cancer treatment.
  - Beneficial impact of exercise and healthy eating during treatment on treatment tolerance, physical fatigue, quality of life, and psychosocial.
- The ten week length determined based on research showing that it takes approximately 10 weeks to form a habit= greater probability to long-term behavior changes.
- At completion of 10-week program, participants able to transition to the YMCA's Livestrong program
  - Increase the chance of long-term behavior change.
  - According to the ACS, community action at the local level is essential to provide safe, enjoyable and accessible opportunities for physical activity.

**TOP ACTIONS STEPS:**

- Applied and received a \$30,000 dollar grant from American Cancer Society and Kohl's Cares
- Legal Team: Participation waiver and rental vivoactive Garmin watch. Contract set up with the YMCA in New Berlin
- Collaboration with RD and cancer exercises specialist/oncology nurse to determine dates/times of program.
  - Agenda, PowerPoints, and evaluation creation
- Marketing: Creation of HEAL program flyer and adding to AW survivorship landing page
- PR team: Increase awareness of program. Possible October news channel story.
- Purchasing of equipment

**RESULTS/CURRENT STATUS:**

- Second oncology nurse working on Cancer Exercise Specialist certification
- Recruitment for participants for both cohorts (Fall & Winter)

**Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL)**

**A free program for breast cancer survivors**

HEAL is a free healthy eating and active living program sponsored by the American Cancer Society through Kohl's Cares. Each HEAL program is 10 weeks long and consists of health education, nutrition counseling and exercise classes from a registered dietitian and an oncology registered nurse/certified cancer exercise specialist.

In-person classes will be held at the New Berlin YMCA. All participants are encouraged to bring a support person.

**Who can attend HEAL?**

- Breast cancer patients between the ages of 19-80 that have been diagnosed with stage I, II, III, or IV breast cancer
- Currently undergoing treatment or completed within the last year
- We are unable to accept breast cancer patients currently undergoing chemotherapy

**What will HEAL provide for breast cancer patients?**

- Personalized exercise programming and nutrition planning
- Ongoing healthy eating and active living support from facilitators throughout the program
- A free 3-month household YMCA membership, free teaching kitchens, rental of Garmin Vivoactive 5 smartwatch and fitness tracker, and more!

**Upcoming sessions**


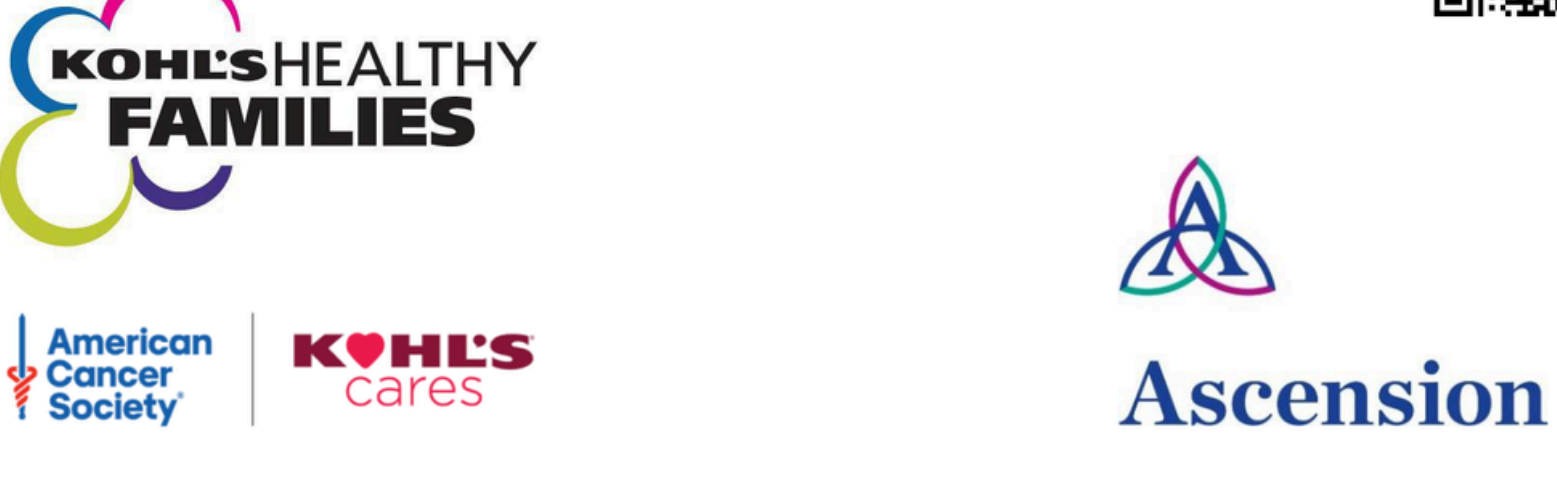
**Fall 2024**

- September 9, 2024 – November 11, 2024; Mondays from 2:30-4:30 pm. and Wednesdays from 2:30- 3:15pm.

**Winter/Spring 2025**

- January 7, 2025 – March 11, 2025; Tuesdays from 2:30-4:30 pm. and Thursdays 2:30- 3:15pm.

Contact Kayla Thorne, Cancer Prevention/Wellness and Survivorship Nurse Coordinator, at [kayla.thorne@ascension.org](mailto:kayla.thorne@ascension.org) or 414-212-5171 if you are interested in participating or scan the QR code to learn more.


**CANCER SURVIVORSHIP EDUCATIONAL HEALTH FAIR**

**OBJECTIVE:**

Host a cancer survivorship health fair for 2024 Cancer Survivorship Day®. Event to celebrate cancer survivorship and an opportunity for community organizations to share information about various topics such as lymphedema, exercise and diet, financial support, and more to cancer survivors, caregivers, and oncology staff.

**BACKGROUND:**

- At Ascension Wisconsin, we align with the National Cancer Institute's definition of a cancer survivor as "An individual is considered a cancer survivor from the time of diagnosis through the balance of life."
- National Cancer Survivorship Day® is a day of celebration and inspiration led by the National Cancer Survivorship Day Foundation.
  - National Cancer Survivorship Day® is also a call to action for further research, more resources, and increased public awareness to improve the lives of cancer survivors.
- This day, the first Sunday in June, is an opportunity for all cancer survivors to connect with each other, celebrate milestones, and recognize those who have supported them along the way.



**TOP ACTIONS STEPS:**



- AW foundation: Donation and sponsorships
- Cancer Survivorship workgroup determined date/time/location/target audience for event,
  - Creation of ascension groups, non-profit, community and pharmaceutical list to invite
  - Set up guest speaker agenda
  - Determined food, drink and decorations
- Marketing
  - Added to survivorship landing page and survivorship quarterly newsletter
  - Facebook event
  - PR team created add, plan was to have news segment but due to cyberattack it was cancelled

**RESULTS/CURRENT STATUS:**

- Received 10 sponsorships with total being \$13,500 to help fund event
- 22 non profits and community programs attended
- 8 Ascension tables were present:
- 52 cancer survivors and family members attend event
- Reported Feedback
  - "The vendors in the fair were very diverse. It was nice to see so many present...Overall, it was wonderful to see this type of event in our community!"
  - "Loved that the survivors were the ones introducing the speakers"
  - "Very excellent program for survivors; great to connect with the community. Well executed and great speakers / exhibitors."
- AW Survivorship Committee is planning on hosting next year for National Cancer Survivorship Day again.



**REFERENCES**

Adjustment to Cancer: Anxiety and Distress (PDQ®): Health Professional Version. 2022 Dec 16. In: PDQ Cancer Information Summaries [Internet]. Bethesda (MD): National Cancer Institute (US); 2002-. PMID: 26389397

American Cancer Society guidelines for Diet and physical activity. American Cancer Society. (2020, June 9). <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/acs-guidelines-nutrition-physical-activity-cancer-prevention/guidelines.html>

Campbell KL, Winters-Stone KM, Wiskeemann J, May AM, Schwartz AL, Courneya KS, Zucker DS, Matthews CE, Ligibel JA, Gerber LH, Morris GS, Patel AV, Hue TF, Peña FM, Schmitz KH. Exercise Guidelines for Cancer Survivors: Consensus Statement from International Multidisciplinary Roundtable. Med Sci Sports Exerc. 2019 Nov;51(11):2375-2390. doi:10.1249/MSS.0000000000002116. PMID: 31626055; PMCID: PMC6576825.

Dierhauser SS, Adlington EL, Cohen L, Saha S, Van Tynnebreck M, Albinani NK, Culos-Reed SN. Yoga for symptom management in oncology: A review of the evidence base and future directions for research. Cancer. 2019 Jun 15;152(12):1979-1989. doi: 10.1002/onc.31979. Epub 2019 Apr 1. PMID: 30933317; PMCID: PMC6541520.

Gardner B, Lally P, Wardle J. Making health habitual: the psychology of habit-formation and general practice. Br J Gen Pract. 2012 Dec;62(605):664-6. doi: 10.3399/bjgp126059466. PMID: 23211256; PMCID: PMC3505409.

Garwal RP, Maroko-Afiek A. Yoga into Cancer Care: A Review of Evidence-based Research. Int J Yoga. 2018 Jan Apr;11(1):3-9. doi: 10.4103/ijoy.IJOY.42.17. PMID: 29343927; PMCID: PMC5769195.

Jones TL, Edroviski L, Rawstrom JG, Hayes SC, Maddison R, Denehy L, Short CE. Self-efficacy, motivation, and habit: psychological correlates of exercise among women with breast cancer. Support Care Cancer. 2023 Sep 20;31(10):584. doi: 10.1007/s00520-023-08040-7. PMID: 37228796; PMCID: PMC10511352.

Liu W, Liu J, Ma L, Chen J. Effect of mindfulness yoga on anxiety and depression in early breast cancer patients received adjuvant chemotherapy: a randomized clinical trial. J Cancer Res Clin Oncol. 2022 Sep;148(9):2549-2560. doi: 10.1007/s00432-022-04167-y. Epub 2022 Jul 5. PMID: 35788727; PMCID: PMC9253261.

Mutrie R, Campbell AM, Whyte F, McConnachie A, Emslie C, Lee L, Kearney N, Walker A, Ritchie D. Benefits of supervised group exercise programme for women being treated for early stage breast cancer: pragmatic randomized controlled trial. BMJ. 2007 Mar 10;334(7592):517. doi: 10.1136/bmj.39094.648553.AE. Epub 2007 Feb 16. PMID: 17307761; PMCID: PMC1819494.

National Cancer Survivorship Day Foundation. (2024, May 28). The Official Website of National Cancer Survivorship Day®. National Cancer Survivorship Day®. <https://ncsd.org/>

National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN). NCCN Guidelines for Patients. Survivorship Care for Healthy Living. NCCN; 2020. Accessed June 6, 2021. [nccn.org/patients/guidelines/content/PDF/survivorship-hi-patient.pdf](https://www.nccn.org/patients/guidelines/content/PDF/survivorship-hi-patient.pdf)

**AUTHOR**

Kayla Thorne RN, MSN, CES  
 Ascension Wisconsin's Cancer Prevention/Wellness & Survivorship Program RN Coordinator  
 Rush University: Masters of Science in Nursing  
 University of Wisconsin-Platteville: Bachelors of Science in Biology, Minor in Physical and Health Education and Special Education  
 Certified Cancer Exercise Specialist