



ECHO Idaho: Cancer Survivorship CASE RECOMMENDATION FORM

ECHO Session Date: 2/11/26

Presenter Credential: LCSW, C-SWHC

Thank you for presenting your patient at ECHO Idaho –Cancer Survivorship.

Summary:

This case involves a 60-year-old woman with stage I triple negative invasive ductal carcinoma of the left breast, diagnosed in 2024 after imaging revealed malignancy in the contralateral breast from a self-detected lump. She completed treatment in 2025, including lumpectomy, revision surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation, and is no longer in active treatment. Her medical history is significant for bipolar disorder, paralyzed hemidiaphragm, sleep apnea, and chronic bronchitis, and she takes multiple psychiatric and respiratory medications. She lives with her spouse and adult daughter, receives SSDI, and experiences social isolation, family estrangement, anxiety, depression, difficulty accessing medications due to insurance issues, and post-treatment functional decline including poor appetite, weight loss, and unsteady gait. Despite engagement in psychiatric care, church, rehabilitation, and support services, she reports low motivation and diminished quality of life. The primary goal is to identify strategies to better support her overall well-being, improve physical and emotional health, and help her reconnect with family and community.

Question:

I have been working with this patient since diagnosis. My hope is to gain input on how to better support her, improve her quality of life.

After review of the case presentation and discussion of this patient's case among the ECHO Community of Practice, the following suggestions have been made:

Good work supporting this patient, providing steady, trauma-informed care in a highly complex case.

Overall Approach

- Continue to use a coordinated, multidisciplinary care plan with close alignment between nutrition, mental health, rehabilitation, and social support.
- Prioritize strong therapeutic relationships, as trust and provider fit are critical for engagement and progress.

Nutrition & Eating Concerns

- Refer to a dietitian to address weight loss, nutritional deficits, and the physical impact of under-nutrition.
- Reframe eating as a tool for strength, healing, and functional recovery rather than weight gain alone.
- Collaborate closely between dietitian and mental health providers to ensure consistent messaging.
- If restrictive eating patterns persist or worsen, consider consultation with a therapist experienced in oncology-related disordered eating.
- If acceptable to the patient, explore community or church-based meal support (e.g., meal train) to reduce the burden of food preparation.



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Mental Health & Psychosocial Support

- Normalize post-treatment anxiety, depression, and distress as common survivorship adjustments, especially with pre-existing mood disorders.
- Use behavioral activation with small, achievable goals (e.g., getting out of bed, eating regularly, brief activity).
- Incorporate meaning-centered psychotherapy to help reconnect with identity, values, and sense of purpose.
- Continue safety planning and monitor mood stability, especially during medication access disruptions.
- Address cancer surveillance anxiety (e.g., fear related to mammograms and recurrence) as part of ongoing therapy.

Rehabilitation & Physical Therapy

- Re-engage in PT/OT with a provider experienced in breast cancer rehab and lymphedema management.
- Consider a one-on-one PT model to support comfort, trust, and individualized care.
- Discuss patient preference for provider gender to improve therapeutic alliance.
- Recognize that meaningful physical gains depend on adequate nutritional support.

Social Connection & Community Resources

- Encourage low-burden, regular social engagement to reduce isolation (e.g., weekly connection).
- Support participation in cancer-specific support groups, including virtual options if in-person feels overwhelming. Here are options:
 - Shades of Pink (breast cancer-specific support group) offers in-person or virtual options
 - Nature-based survivor programs (e.g., [Hike 2 Heal](#), [River Discovery](#)) allow gentle engagement and caregiver inclusion
 - Help explore existing church and women's group connections for emotional and practical support.
 - Consider the Treasure Valley YMCA Oncology Recovery Program (for survivors to connect, heal, and help build support community with other survivors; includes exercise & art; low-cost/free)

Medications & Care Coordination

- Recommend a collaborative review of psychiatric medications to assess whether adjustments could improve mood stability and engagement.
- Ensure ongoing communication among oncology, psychiatry, social work, rehabilitation, and nutrition providers to maintain aligned goals and messaging.

Additional Resources:

- [This Might Surprise You: A Breast Cancer Story](#) (a comic style book that illustrates the chaos of survivorship and can help survivors feel less alone; the author also had breast cancer)