

**10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

**Concurrent Session 1B**

**\*Living with 9/11 Cancer: A Support Group Aimed at Helping WTC Health Program General Responders and Survivors Diagnosed with 9/11 Related-Cancer and the Introduction of Patient Centered-Goals and Discussing Treating the Person vs Treating the Disease**

**In-Person Only**

**\*This session is approved for 1.5 SW CE credits**

**Presenters: Sharon Daneshgar, LCSW-R, OSW-C and Georgianne Kraft, LCSW-R, OSW-R**

**Abstract Summary:**

There is an indisputable link between 9/11 and chronic health problems for General Responders and Survivors of the attacks on the World Trade Center. The WTC Health Program has identified several types of cancers that research has definitively linked to 9/11 exposures. The diagnosis of cancer brings emotional distress to patients and that stress is amplified for those who have been certified with 9/11 related-cancer attributable to their presence in the New York City Disaster Area. Oncology social workers identified the gap in support and patient education to meet the unique needs of those living with 9/11 related-cancer.

A monthly virtual support group was established to educate and empower General Responders and Survivors diagnosed with 9/11 related-cancer to connect with others who are going through the same experience. To achieve patient-centered goals when living with cancer, advance directives and goals of care need to be discussed. Oncology social workers developed a standard way to introduce family meetings in a positive way for individual group members. Group members are explained that palliative care focuses on symptoms management for the person. Palliative care is introduced positively with the goal Learning Objectives: of assuring the patient that they will not be abandoned, and a plan can be developed to address their everyday

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Discuss the benefits of providing a support group to General Responders and Survivors diagnosed with 9/11 related-cancer with a focus on peer support to share feelings and to reduce isolation.
2. Goals-of-care conversations can help clarify patients' priorities and values and can be discussed early on and throughout treatment and care.
3. Explain the family meeting process, introduce the palliative care team, and define shared decision making. Assist individual group members as advocates of self-determination and for care that meets their culture needs.
4. Palliative care team introduction to the group to discuss improving quality of life for members facing problems with cancer causing life-limiting illness. Presenter, an expert in palliative care, to address the prevention and relief of pain and suffering through a comprehensive assessment by the palliative care team.
5. Provide a support system to group members to help cope with their cancer, enhance their quality of life by integrating their psychological and spiritual care, and a team approach to help to cope and live as actively as possible.

**Speakers Bio:**

Sharon Daneshgar, LCSW-R, OSW-C: Manager, Social Work Services at RJ Zuckerberg Cancer Institute, Northwell Health

Sharon has been an oncology social worker for over 25 years. She is a helpful guide throughout the cancer patients' journey. Sharon is a compassionate and dedicated social worker who assists patients with a wide range of concerns, including active treatment, newly diagnosed, survivorship, palliative care, and hospice care. Sharon leads support groups for blood cancers and co-facilitates the "Living with 9/11 Cancer Support Group." She facilitates a peer support group for oncology social workers at Northwell Health to provide an opportunity to connect, discuss and collaborate on topics related to cancer care. Sharon is a Member of the Cancer Committee at Northwell Health Cancer Institute. She received the AOSW Hematology Oncology Social Worker Award in 2014 and in 2010 the LLS Quality of Life Award.

Georgianne Kraft, LCSW-R, OSW-C: Manager, Social Work Services at Northwell Health Cancer Institute at Rego Park

Georgianne has been a social worker at Northwell Health for over 10 years. She was a NYPD Lieutenant for 20 years prior to becoming a social worker. During 9/11, she was a first responder who assisted with search and rescue operations. Georgianne understands the long-term physical and mental health effects of 9/11. As an oncology social worker, she collaborates with cancer patients to build on their strengths and to assist with helping to effectively address their life challenges. She is committed to assisting individuals attain the personal growth they are committed to developing and co-facilitates the "Living with 9/11 Cancer Support Group."