

Life after cancer

- Karine's story



Hi! My name's Karine, at 24 years old, I started my teaching career... and I was diagnosed with lymphoma.

It felt like I had been struggling for weeks to understand why I wasn't feeling well. When I got diagnosed, I felt relieved.

During my treatments, it felt like I locked up my feelings in a box. Although, I spoke about what I was going through I didn't have any real emotion. Once I was in remission, I slowly started to open that box, and that is when I felt afraid for my future.



When I went back to work and started focusing on my future, my mind was flooded with uncertainty. Would I have the same energy and be able to teach like before? Would my medical history prevent me from building relationships? Could I take financial risks knowing that I might relapse?

After going into remission, I thought that my life would go back to the way it was, but that wasn't the case. I felt the need to meet other people who had been affected by cancer. While that had a positive impact for me, I had trouble relating to those I met, because they were much older than me.



I decided to take action, so I could get control over what I could to make myself feel better.

Over time, I have been able to distance myself from my illness. At times, it feels as if it happened to someone else. Now, I have the choice to rummage around in that box when I need to, but I wake up in the morning without thinking about the fact that I had cancer.

Today, I no longer feel obliged to talk about what I experienced. I talk about it when I'm comfortable and I feel it's relevant. Talking about it with an employer or someone I just met can help them better understand my situation. Gradually, I have become more confident in my ability to live life to the fullest and take risks.

I was able to find cancer resources for young adults. Additionally, I joined a nature expedition with people my age. Connecting with other young individuals who had gone through similar experiences provided immense support and assistance. Spending time with them and knowing that we had this in common really felt good.





Psssst! Everybody's different, and what works for one person might not work so well for someone else.

My advice:

Give yourself permission to share at your own pace and what you feel most comfortable with. Remember, knowing what you've been through will help those around you understand the difficulties you face now.

Share how you feel with the people that you're comfortable confiding in. But most of all, give yourself time. For dedicated support during this transition period visit bloodcancers.ca.

Virtual support groups and online discussion forums can give you a chance to talk to people your age who have had similar experiences. Feel free to check them out.



We would like to thank Karine for helping us create this resource. This publication was made possible thanks to the support of:



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If you'd like to join a community of young adults, like you, who have experienced a blood cancer, contact us.

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