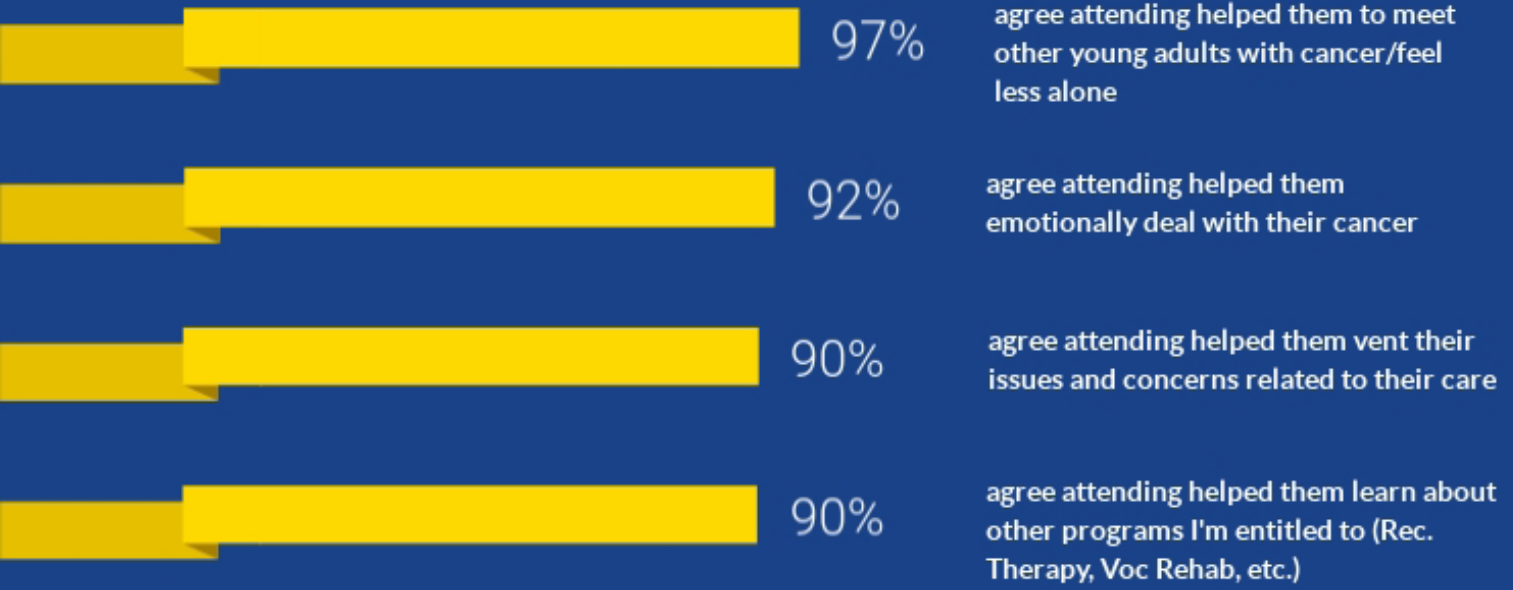
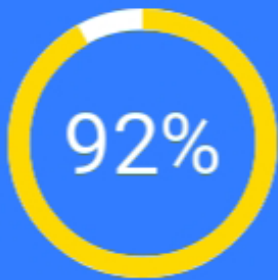


AYA Support Groups & Outings at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center

by Meghan van der Eijk, LICSW, OSW-C
Ulman Foundation, Young Adult Patient Navigator

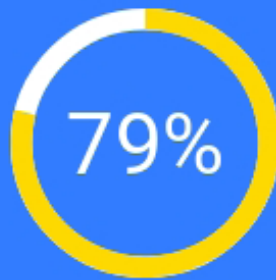


AYA Group Meeting

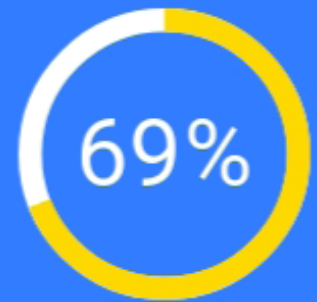


attended again

AYA Social Outing



came to at least one more



attended a group meeting or social outing because they wanted to meet other young adults with cancer



31
Average age

39 Patients/Survivors Attending



● Active Duty 28
● Dependents 11

3

Caregivers (2 wives,
1 sibling)

What keeps/kept you coming back to the group, or to the social outings?

Meghan and the other social workers support kept me coming back to group and social outings. They are so helpful and caring and the activities Ulman has helps distract us from our cancer diagnoses. The group and events gave me some Hope again!

Once in the group, I felt apart of a close knit family. Its worth it to go even if I might not talk. Listening and feeling it on the inside is enough.

Meeting similar people and hearing their stories and how it can better inform my path

Being able to laugh about cancer and hearing other have the same problems that caregivers don't understand.

They are a great way to connect with others who have experienced life changing diagnoses

Is there anything that surprised you, after coming to group or an event?

How relaxed the environment was and how many people their is with cancer in the military.

Just how many other young adults are feeling and going through the same thing I am. I'm not alone in the rare cancer I have someone else had it too!

My first encounter I was surprised by the awesome support and the nonjudgmental environment.

The entire atmosphere. It was light hearted, fun but also serious and emotional...it was able to change/adapt to the mood and needs of the group and all members were understanding

The group is very receptive and understanding

Husband's positive response to talking with the group

Meeting similar people and hearing their stories and how it can better inform my path, and getting to do new things that I normally would not be able to or think about.

What Is/was the best part of coming to group, or coming to social outings?

Getting out of my social isolation with others that could truly relate. To be able to vent about frustrations without being judged

Being around a group of people who are going through similar experiences made me realize it's okay to laugh again, and that having a morbid sense of humor is a perfectly normal coping mechanism.

Connecting with others, laughing and crying together