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

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97% agree attending helped them to meet other young adults with cancer/feel less alone

92% agree attending helped them emotionally deal with their cancer

90% agree attending helped them vent their issues and concerns related to their care

90% agree attending helped them learn about other programs I'm entitled to (Rec. Therapy, Voc Rehab, etc.)

AYA Group Meeting
- 92% attended again

AYA Social Outing
- 79% came to at least one more

69% attended a group meeting or social outing because they wanted to meet other young adults with cancer

39 Patients/Survivors Attending

31 Average age

- 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 Ulan 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
- 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.
- My first encounter I was surprised by the awesome support and the nonjudgmental environment.
- The group is very receptive and understanding.
- 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.
- Husband's positive response to talking with the group

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

- 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.
- 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.