

# Supporting Cancer Patients Through Creative Expression



The benefits of creative expression are well documented. For those experiencing cancer as well as those supporting a friend or family member with cancer, increased stress and anxiety are not uncommon. At Cancer Support Community Greater Philadelphia at Gilda's Club (CSCGP), mind/body programs provide a healthy outlet to address these issues. One very popular part of the mind/body series is the "Writing for Health and Wellness" program.

In this program, incorporating techniques from journaling and expressive writing, participants have the opportunity to write and share their words with other people who understand the demands of a cancer experience. This is not about becoming a great writer; it is about using writing as a way to deal with and heal from one's own cancer experience and doing that with other people who will really "get" what each other are writing and saying. No writing experience or expertise is necessary.

This program is facilitated by Janet Falon. Janet is a writer and writing teacher in Elkins Park, PA. She has been teaching journaling to people dealing with cancer for nearly 15 years and has taught journaling at Cancer Support Community for many years. Her expertise and commitment to the cancer community have made her programs very popular. Janet is also the author of *The Jewish Journaling Book*. In order to allow many individuals to participate, we ask that participants limit themselves to two classes per month. To learn more about Janet's approach to journaling, read her recent article: <https://copingmag.com/journaling-your-cancer-journey/>.

Those who have already participated in Janet's class felt that it was important to have a place to share their thoughts and writings. Creative Expressions | Cancer Support Community Greater Philadelphia ([cancersupportphiladelphia.org](http://cancersupportphiladelphia.org)) on the Cancer Support Community website shares the work of those who have participated in Janet's ongoing program.

Experiencing a cancer diagnosis introduces individuals and families to new challenges, experiences, and systems. Not every experience is tangible, and not every challenge is physical. Individuals and loved ones must also manage the emotional toll that can come with a cancer diagnosis. Storytelling, journaling, artwork, or other creative expressions can be effective ways to deal with these emotions and help with the healing process.

In addition to journaling, Cancer Support Community is also starting "Creating Personal Monologues for the Stage". In this dynamic workshop, led by Shauna Kanter, Director of the Voice Theatre in New York City and Woodstock, participants create and share their own monologue. Focusing creative techniques that free the voice and spirit, workshop members receive nourishing feedback from a seasoned theater pro. This workshop is presented in partnership with Theatre Within. To learn more about its mission, visit <https://www.theatrewithin.org/>.

A tentative performance is scheduled for Friday, June 18 at 7:30 pm. Seven CSCGP participants will perform their personal monologues for the community. Please feel free to join this event and learn more about this exciting new offering.



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**CSCGP**  
*at Gilda's Club*

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