



# What is Cancer Navigation?

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Cancer navigation deals with every aspect of a cancer survivor's health care, which can include one's primary care physician and any specialists treating other medical conditions. Cancer treatment affects not only cancer survivors and their loved ones. It affects their entire health care team.

## Patient navigation systems are designed to:

- Reduce cancer incidence and mortality.
- Improve patient quality of life.
- Develop education targeted to specific patient needs.
- Provide access to early screening diagnoses and treatment.
- Help patients navigate the health care system.
- Help patients adhere to their medical treatment.
- Remove any barriers to care.

Patient navigation began as a community-based practice, when Dr. Harold Freeman pioneered an outreach program in Harlem, NYC. Dr. Freeman

provided education to a severely underserved group of women with high mortality rates. His studies showed improvement in survival. Over the years, patient navigation grew into a massive, largely hospital-based program, and moved away from its grassroots beginnings.

RBOI returns patient navigation to its community-based roots. Our navigators are licensed clinical social workers. We help bridge the gap between the community and large health systems. When individuals can't access care, don't have resources, or need psychosocial support, they reach out to us.

- We help connect them to free cancer screenings when available.
- We work alongside hospital navigators to bridge any gaps in care.
- We find resources, financial assistance programs, and groups to help them overcome barriers. RBOI also donates to Citrus Aid Cancer Foundation and Heartfelt

- Unconditional Giving (HUGs) Charities to help ease financial burdens.
- We serve on community boards, such as those at Tobacco Free Florida, Cancer Alliance of Marion County, or Rotary Club, to educate and bridge gaps.

We are out in the communities we serve, and we are there when the active phase of treatment ends and people are looking for emotional and mental health support.



## Dealing With Survivor's Guilt

Surviving a cancer diagnosis can create feelings of guilt or sadness around thoughts of people who have not survived cancer, or of the toll one's illness has taken on family and friends. Known as survivor's guilt, this common and normal emotional response can be an attempt to make sense of one's cancer experience, but it can also affect one's quality of life.

Healthy coping techniques can be used to address survivor's guilt. These include:

- Exercise
- Seeking social support, including through a support group
- Helping others, such as by volunteering
- Practicing self-care in one's daily habits

## by the numbers

# 1990

Dr. Harold P. Freeman starts the first patient navigation program at the Harlem Hospital Center.

# 2009

The Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigators, the largest national patient navigation network, is founded.

# 2017

National Navigation Roundtable launches, aiming to achieve health equity and improve access to quality cancer care.

# 2022

Patient navigation is a required component in the Enhancing Oncology Model, released by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI).

- Seeking professional help
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Visualization
- Mindfulness
- Creative expression.

RBOI's oncology navigators, licensed clinical social workers, and support programs are available to the community for anyone dealing with cancer, at no cost to either you or your insurance, and regardless of where you are being treated. Wendy Hall, LCSW, is a certified navigator. Amy Roberts, LCSW, helped one of the first patient navigation programs nationally under a grant funded by the American Cancer Society.

### Wendy Hall

352-527-0106 | WHall@rboi.com

### Amy Roberts

352-732-0277 | Aroberts@rboi.com



L-R: RBOI's patient navigators, Wendy Hall, LCSW, and Amy Roberts, LCSW



## Patient-centered radiation oncology close to home

**The Villages** 352.259.2200

**Ocala** 352.732.0277

**Timber Ridge** 352.861.2400

**Inverness** 352.726.3400

**Lecanto** 352.527.0106

**RBOI.com**

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