

How to organize Patient Group Meetings Expert Marketplace Sessions; CML Horizons, Prague 2013

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Even though the whole world today has shrunk into the screen of the smallest possible electronic device in your hands and you have the virtual world in your pocket, there is an immediacy in a face to face encounter that no electronic pulse can match. In the same way a student will still want his professor to impart knowledge within the enlightening and comforting walls of his classroom so too will anyone else seeking information and support in any other field yearn for the warmth in the personal touch and presence of his peers.

A diagnosis of cancer brings with it tremendous emotional trauma and social stress. One of the roles and a major responsibility of an advocacy group has been to provide the informational and emotional support to their members and try and help them cope with this new situation in their lives. Over a period of time many of the patients and their families will be able to bond with each other and bring a tremendous amount of comfort and solace into their lives.

In order to provide a platform for this learning and sharing, patient groups must begin organize meetings bringing patients and care givers from all parts of the country as also eminent oncologists and haematologists to share their expertise with the eager audience.

Some pointers on how to organize and conduct such meetings:

- Regional? National? Seminars? Some examples of patient meetings
- What could be objectives by running these types of meetings?
- Beside presentations: Which session formats are feasible?
- What to consider for presentations e.g. from medical experts?
- Sharing best practice and tips:
 - * Announcing the meeting
 - * Volunteers' Role in these meetings
 - * Post meeting activities

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