



MISSION

The mission of the Sarcoma Alliance Peer-to-Peer Network is to facilitate positive relationships between individuals affected by sarcoma so that they may find emotional support, encouragement and information.

OVERVIEW

The Peer-to-Peer Network consists of individuals affected by sarcoma — survivors, caregivers and loved ones – who wish to correspond with others in the sarcoma community. The Sarcoma Alliance matches peers based on the specific needs of the individuals, and the peers correspond on terms they each agree upon. Sarcoma Alliance staff are available to help participants experience positive matches and to update their participation when needs evolve.

HOW IT WORKS

After you submit an online application and confidentiality agreement, a Sarcoma Alliance staff member will look for other members of the Network with whom you would be a good match. The staff member will contact you within five days to further discuss your needs and how to best help you.

Once you are matched, you will receive contact information so that you and your peer can communicate directly, under terms agreed upon by you both. These terms should follow the Guidelines for Participation presented in the application. We expect most peer matches to lead to positive relationships, full of support, encouragement and useful information, and we hope that the Peer-to-Peer Network will help you find a friend in the process.

Despite our best efforts, not all peer matches will be successful. Nor will all successful matches remain beneficial as the needs of the peers evolve. You should contact The Sarcoma Alliance if your peer match is not working out, and we will work quickly to meet your needs. You should also contact us if the information on your application no longer accurately reflects your needs. You are, of course, free to discontinue participation in the Network at any time.

The Sarcoma Alliance will periodically contact you to get feedback on the Peer-to-Peer program. These evaluations are an important tool to help us make improvements. We also welcome your feedback at any time.

For more information or assistance, please contact The Sarcoma Alliance at 415-381-7236 or info@sarcomaalliance.org. Non-internet application forms are available upon request.



GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION

These Guidelines are intended to facilitate positive, healthy relationships between peers, and it is expected that all Network members will follow them to the best of their abilities.

Peers are:

- Willing to listen and understand
- Willing to provide friendship, reassurance and support
- Willing to share information and resources
- Willing to interact in a respectful, ethical and nonjudgmental way
- Committed to maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of those they meet in this program
- Committed to helping others

Peers are NOT:

- Professional counselors or providers of therapy or treatment
- Substitutes for professional health care providers
- To make decisions for others
- To give medical advice

Environment

Find an environment for corresponding that is beneficial to each person. Discuss up front what logistics work for you, and be respectful of your peer's preferences too. For example, if phone calls are welcome only during certain hours, then discuss this early on. Beyond logistics, a beneficial environment also requires respect, integrity and consideration for your peer's needs.

Communication

Remember that what works for you may not work for someone else. Discuss the various issues with an open mind and heart. Make sure the relationship is equal and that each person is given the opportunity to speak and share. Listening is important, but the ability to express yourself is just as important. Strive to express yourself clearly. Ask questions when you don't understand. Treat each other with respect.

Limitations

A peer match may not be beneficial to both people for a variety of reasons, such as changing needs or health status. It is counter-productive to assign blame or accept feelings of guilt when a peer match is failing to work. Do not try to "stick it out" with a match that is clearly disadvantageous. Rather, embrace each other's choices, wish each other well, and discontinue the peer relationship. Then contact The Sarcoma Alliance to review your needs and, if you desire, receive a new peer.

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR PEER GUIDES

The National Cancer Institute booklet "Taking Time: Support for People with Cancer and the People Who Care About Them" is available for free online at www.cancer.gov/cancerinfo/takingtime or by calling 1-800-4-CANCER. This booklet discusses the different feelings you may experience, how to communicate, and how to cope with cancer and its effects on your life or on the life of someone you love.

DISCLAIMERS

Information about what treatments, medications or therapies are appropriate should come only from a physician or licensed medical provider. The Sarcoma Alliance neither approves nor endorses any treatment advice that an individual might suggest or receive as a result of its Peer-to-Peer Network. The Sarcoma Alliance provides no formal training to Network participants on how to be a peer guide. Nor can the Sarcoma Alliance accept responsibility for Network members failing to adhere to the Guidelines for Participation.

By signing below, I certify that I have read and understand the above Guidelines and Disclaimers, and that I will follow these Guidelines to the best of my ability.

Signature _____



CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHICS AGREEMENT

SARCOMA ALLIANCE'S COMMITMENT TO YOU

The Sarcoma Alliance will not share or sell your name or any of your personal information with any organization, business, or person.

Any information you submit to The Sarcoma Alliance Peer-to-Peer Network will remain personal and confidential. The information will only be used by Sarcoma Alliance directors and staff members for the purposes of establishing connections between you and other members of the Peer-to-Peer Network and for assessing the performance of the program in achieving its goals.

YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE NETWORK

Information you obtain about other members of the Peer-to-Peer Network is to remain personal and confidential at all times. You will not share members' names or any personal information with any organization, business, or person.

You will abide by the Sarcoma Alliance Peer-to-Peer Network's code of ethics during your involvement in the Network. This code, which is an agreement among those participating in the Network, holds that Network participants will:

Embrace the philosophy that peer helping is an effective way to support the needs of people affected by sarcoma.

Behave with integrity and abide by the Guidelines for Participation in the Peer-to-Peer Network.

Treat members of the Network with respect.

Maintain the confidentiality of information imparted during the course of interactions facilitated by the Peer-to-Peer Network.

Refrain from giving medical advice.

I agree to abide by the above standards to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of those with whom I come in contact during my participation in The Sarcoma Alliance's Peer-to-Peer Network. The Sarcoma Alliance will also maintain the privacy and confidentiality of my personal information in the manner stated above.

Signature _____