

# PAMELA GINSBERG, PH.D.



Pamela J. Ginsberg, Ph.D. is a licensed psychologist specializing in women's health, psycho-oncology, and women's issues. Dr. Ginsberg has worked in the field of mental health since 1986, earning her doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology in 1993. She has owned and operated her own private consulting and therapy practice since 1999. She is licensed in PA and NJ. She has a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Ball State University, an M.A. degree in Counseling Psychology from Radford University, and a B.A. in Psychology from Stockton University.

As a doctoral intern at the Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, MA, Dr. Ginsberg became interested in health psychology and was part of an innovative multi-disciplinary team of medical and psychology professionals who integrated a focus on the family with medical care. This experience shaped the work that Dr. Ginsberg has done since then, learning more about women's health psychology and then focusing her interests on the field of psycho-oncology, which is the study of the psychological effects of cancer on the patient and the family. Dr. Ginsberg has become an expert in this field and is a recognized clinician, speaker, and instructor in the area of women and cancer.

Dr. Ginsberg has been on the medical staff of Doylestown Hospital since 2004 and serves on the cancer committee for the Doylestown Health Cancer Institute. She is on the Board of Directors for the Cancer Support Community of Greater Philadelphia and is the Chair of the Medical Advisory Board for that organization. She is a member of the medical advisory board for KNOWoncology, a research database for the Oncology Association of Naturopathic Physicians. She is the Co-Chair of the Health and Wellness committee of the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce and is a member of LeTip of Doylestown, and she has served in several positions on that Board of Directors, including President, in the 15 years that she has been a member.

Dr. Ginsberg is a member of the American Psychological Association, the Society for Health Psychology, and the American Psycho-Social Oncology Society and is a fellow of the Pennsylvania Psychological Association. She is a frequent speaker and consultant for national and local cancer organizations, including Living Beyond Breast Cancer, Unite for Her, The Healing Consciousness Foundation, and Gilda's

Club. Dr. Ginsberg has given webinars, lectures, and radio interviews and has taught continuing education programs on topics related to managing cancer and other health concerns. She was also an Adjunct Professor of Graduate Studies for 7 years at Chestnut Hill College.

Dr. Ginsberg has a special interest in working with women with metastatic (Stage IV) breast cancer. She runs an ongoing program through Holy Redeemer Hospital and the Healing Consciousness Foundation for women with this diagnosis. She has given lectures on managing this very difficult diagnosis and has worked with patients and family members who are dealing with the challenges of the illness and the far-reaching consequences of this disease.

In addition to working with cancer patients, Dr. Ginsberg works with women who are struggling with many other medical issues as well. She recognizes the challenge in managing a medical diagnosis and how it impacts the family and every aspect of a woman's life. Dr. Ginsberg provides support and guidance to help with medical decision making and navigating through the world of serious illness. She works with caregivers of a medically ill patient as well and also does a great deal of work related to grief and bereavement and end-of-life issues.

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Dr. Ginsberg focuses her work on the present and the future, not the past. She helps people understand what is blocking them from reaching their goals, helps them to learn to make better decisions, set priorities, and make and implement action plans to achieve their goals. She also works with women who are struggling with overwhelming stress, anxiety, depression, life transitions, career issues, relationship problems, mid-life issues, empty-nest syndrome, and boundary setting.

Dr. Ginsberg will tailor a treatment plan for each individual and work collaboratively with other medical or helping professionals. She can also do lunch-and-learn programs in small or medium-sized companies on topics such as stress management, communication issues, mindfulness meditation, and dealing with difficult people. She has worked with many small local companies and also some larger companies such as Ocean Spray, Linens N Things, and AT&T.

Dr. Ginsberg can be contacted through her website, [www.pginsbergphd.com](http://www.pginsbergphd.com), or by phone at 215-340-0608 for psychotherapy, speaking engagements, or consultation.





## Young Women and Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is not just an old lady's disease. According to the Young Survival Coalition, each year 70,000 men and women between the ages of 15-39 are diagnosed with cancer in the US, and breast cancer is the most common cancer for women in this age group. In fact, 22% of new breast cancer cases annually will be women under the age of 40. So, yes, young women get breast cancer too.

There are some unique challenges for younger women who are diagnosed with breast cancer. Some of these challenges include caring for children during treatment, early menopause, caring for aging parents at the same time as raising your own children and being in treatment, social isolation due to not knowing other young women in the same situation, body image and sexual dysfunction issues, anxiety about mortality, fatigue and other treatment side effects, fear of recurrence, and work disruption while building or being in the thick of your career. These problems are just a few of the common problems reported by young women with breast cancer.

Psychologists who are trained in working with cancer patients (psycho-oncology) can be very helpful to everyone with a cancer diagnosis, including young women with breast cancer. It is very helpful to have an objective point of view as a young woman with cancer navigates through the many family, relationship, social, financial, and intrapersonal challenges associated with this diagnosis. For instance, how do you talk to young children about cancer? How do you know what is age appropriate and what to tell and what to keep from children? How will you answer questions that come up, such as questions about hair loss or other physical changes, questions about being more tired or unable to participate in certain activities, or reactions from children such as fear, anger, confusion and sadness? How will the treatment and ongoing side effects impact my relationship with my spouse? How can I improve communication with my spouse about how I am feeling and what I am worried about? A psychologist trained in cancer care can help you think through these and other issues that are unique to this illness.

In addition, given that breast cancer at a young age is an off-life cycle event, the sense of social isolation and lack of understanding from others is very upsetting to



many women. Many young women find the survivorship phase of the illness particularly challenging, because most young women's peers do not have experience with the ongoing side effects, long-term medical concerns, and body image issues that often define the late effects of the illness. Emotional burdens, such as worry, fear of recurrence, ongoing surveillance and hormonal treatments and their side effects, can all impact the young woman's quality of life. It is difficult feeling alone when managing all of this, especially in such a long-term way. These burdens and the emotional consequences of them can be addressed through psychotherapy, stress management and mindfulness practices, lifestyle changes, and honest introspection. In my work with young women with breast cancer, many tell me that having a "safe place" to work through these issues is extremely helpful and does not further burden family and friends who may not know how to respond to such concerns.

Psychosocial support is critically important for women with this diagnosis, but it may be hard to find a support group appropriate for your age or a mental health professional familiar with the dynamics of cancer care. This creates a block for women who are often struggling with trying to manage their lives during and after treatment.

For the women of Bucks County, help is available through several local organizations as well as national organizations. The Cancer Support Community of Greater Philadelphia (Gilda's Club), The Healing Consciousness Foundation, Unite for Her, and The Breathing Room Foundation are some of the wonderful local resources available to help you and your family. National organizations like the Young Survival Coalition, Living Beyond Breast Cancer, and Sharsharet are also available for help with programs specifically for young women.

Working with a psychologist or other licensed mental health professional can be incredibly helpful to manage this diagnosis. Make sure you choose someone who has experience working with cancer patients and young women with cancer specifically. Reaching out for help can be one of the best things you do for yourself, and, if there is ever a time in your life where you need to care for your own needs, now is the time.