

## QUESTION

# How do I encourage physical activity and health promotion behaviors when providing culturally sensitive care to cancer survivors?

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I decided to pursue a career in nursing because I believe it is a career that plays to my strengths of being a compassionate and empathetic individual with an internal drive to care for others. Throughout my life, I have had a handful of close family and friends be diagnosed with cancer, and these experiences sparked my interest in oncology nursing. I am drawn to the continuity of care aspect of oncology nursing, as well as the fast-paced and dynamic nature.

In summer 2020, I was selected to learn about caring for adults with cancer and their families through the University of North Carolina (UNC) Lineberger-Sylvia Lauterborn and Warren Trent Piver Oncology Fellowship in the School of Nursing at UNC at Chapel Hill. During that fellowship, I conducted a literature review, which I expanded on during my senior honors thesis to focus on physical activity and health promotion behaviors in Black cancer survivors with multiple myeloma.

Physical activity and health promotion behaviors have always been important to me. I enjoy exercising because it provides me with an outlet for stress and boosts my mood and energy level. I also recognize that physical activity has greatly improved my quality of life and overall mental and physical health, which is something that I find rewarding. As a nursing student who was interested in oncology, I became curious as to how physical activity is being encouraged to improve physical and mental well-being and, ultimately, increase quality of life in cancer survivors. I decided to focus on multiple myeloma because there has been limited research on how physical activity and health promotion behaviors influence individuals with multiple myeloma, particularly Black individuals, who are disproportionately affected by

this disease. The majority of research in multiple myeloma has been conducted with Americans who are White.

For my research, I interviewed two adults with multiple myeloma to better understand their physical activity and health promotion behaviors, as well as their potential barriers to activity. These two participants identify as Black and considering that multiple myeloma is a disease that is more common in individuals who are Black, it was important for me to hear from multiple myeloma survivors in this population. Three main themes emerged from these brief interviews: (a) a diagnosis of multiple myeloma leads to changes in individuals' physical abilities and lifestyles over time, (b) physical activity is made more challenging because of the long-term effects of multiple myeloma, and (c) physical activity may not be considered to be a top personal priority among individuals with multiple myeloma. As a young White and Hispanic woman, I learned from the experiences of these two Black cancer survivors during our brief interview. Learning to see and value other individuals' perspectives, experiences, and wishes is essential to the application of culturally sensitive care. Healthcare providers must continue to listen and learn from others to ensure that all patients are supported and provided the best care. This openness and willingness to learn from others fosters respect and understanding, which enhances the nurse-patient relationship and helps to ensure that patient care overall is individualized.

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**KEYWORDS**

multiple myeloma; cancer survivors; oncology nursing; mentorship; student nurse

**DIGITAL OBJECT IDENTIFIER**

10.1188/21.CJON.736

**RESOURCES**

- **Authority in Ethical, Responsible Clinical Research**

Offers information on reaching underrepresented populations in research  
<https://bit.ly/3mHZFCs>

- **EveryNurse**

Provides actionable steps that can be taken to provide culturally sensitive care  
<https://bit.ly/3AzPwwB>

- **International Myeloma Foundation's African American Initiative**

Aims to increase awareness and improve short- and long-term outcomes in this patient population  
<https://bit.ly/3mHP0wy>