MYTH vs FACTS: Childhood Cancer Survivors

**MYTH**
- Survivors are disease carriers and pose health risks to others.
- All survivors are genetically inferior and have fertility problems.
- Survivors have short lives.
- Survivors do poorly in school and employment.
- Childhood Cancer Survivors will always carry the stigma of cancer in their adult life.
- Childhood cancer isn’t contagious. It’s not transmitted by the skin or by contact with bodily fluids. It’s safe to play, socialize and interact with childhood cancer survivors.
- Some survivors may have long-term physical issues, but this isn’t true for most survivors. In some cases, cancer and its treatment determined the course of any fertility challenges.
- Childhood cancer survivors are cured. Survivors no longer need continuing, follow-up care.

**FACT**
- Survivors are not disease carriers. It’s not transmitted by a virus, nor is it infectious. It’s safe to play, socialize and interact with childhood cancer survivors.
- Childhood cancer isn’t contagious. It’s not transmitted by the skin or by contact with bodily fluids. It’s safe to play, socialize and interact with childhood cancer survivors.
- While two out of three childhood cancer survivors have late effects and secondary cancers, this isn’t linked to life expectancy. The nature and severity of late effects also influences life expectancy. Reductions in the expectancy depend on: - how timely the cancer diagnosis was - what the initial treatment was - the appropriateness of the treatment received.
- Continuing follow-up care remains important for survivors. They are at higher risk for secondary cancers, or chronic health conditions related to their initial cancer treatment. Vigilance and regular monitoring are critical for early identification and treatment of any health challenge or impairment.
- There is life and radiation after cancer. There’s a ‘new normal’ for surviving childhood cancer. Most survivors experience late effects related to their treatment. Survivors can effectively reintegrate with family, friends and communities. Their adjustment is the key factor to achieving the best outcomes. Most survivors are high performers who do well in their education and career.
- They need to be informed. There’s a lot of sensitive information which can be shared with them to help them understand their condition. This is especially crucial for teens and young adults. They need to feel empowered and able to take charge of their own health and well-being.
- In most countries, survivors are looked up to and treated as heroes and survivors with courageously overcome cancer. They’re viewed positively and as an ‘living proof’ that cancer can be conquered. In countries where discrimination and stigma still exist, survivors and their supporters need to stand up, speak up and challenge the stigma. Share their stories and set the example of their new lives.
- Education, information and real life stories are powerful tools to break stigma and eliminate discrimination.

**MYTH**
- Childhood cancer survivors have short lives.
- Survivors have lived normal lives.
- Childhood cancer survivors are cured.
- Survivors do poorly in school and employment.
- Childhood Cancer Survivors always carry the stigma of cancer in their adult life.
- Childhood cancer isn’t contagious. It’s not transmitted by the skin or by contact with bodily fluids. It’s safe to play, socialize and interact with childhood cancer survivors.
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