



Cancer and Intimacy



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Redefining Intimacy In Cancer Care

Beyond Sexual Function

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Intimacy coach

Sex educator



Stage IV cancer survivor



Pioneer of intimacy

informed cancer care

& developer of

practical

implementation

strategies

Founder of



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WHAT?

I want intimacy to be treated as an ordinary, legitimate and supported dimension of cancer care rather than something patients have to discover, name and solve largely on their own.

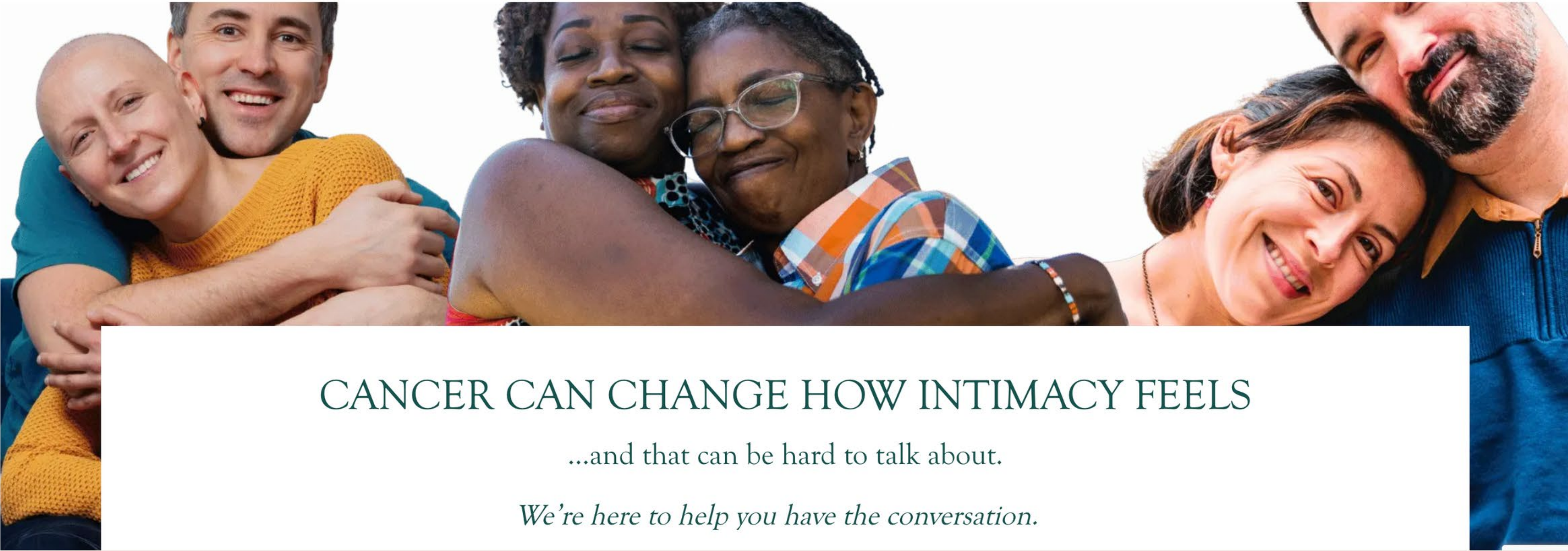
WHY?

Because survival is not the only outcome of cancer care. Patients are also trying to remain psychologically well, connected to the people they love, comfortable enough in their bodies to live in them, and able to rebuild a life during and after cancer. Intimacy touches all of those things.

Cancer can change far more than sexual function!



It can change how we experience our bodies, ourselves, and the people closest to us.



CANCER CAN CHANGE HOW INTIMACY FEELS

...and that can be hard to talk about.

We're here to help you have the conversation.

 **Free Resource Kit** A collection of guides, reflections, and practical tools for navigating intimacy during or after cancer.

GET YOUR FREE CANCER AND INTIMACY RESOURCE KIT TODAY

What do we mean when we say “intimacy”?



most of us were given
a very limited definition



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**penetrative
sex**

**physical
affection**

At face value

Intimacy

is often interpreted to mean

romance

being in a relationship

Intimacy

isn't

one behavior



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Intimacy

also includes...

pleasure

body image

vulnerability

desire

relationships of all kinds

identity

emotional closeness

feeling like yourself

communication

touch

feeling desirable & attractive

trust in the body



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Real talk

(that doesn't get talked about)

Partners

"I'm afraid of hurting them."

"I don't know how to bring up sex anymore."

"I miss our old connection, but I don't want to pressure them."

"I want to help, but I don't know what's helpful."

"I'm grieving too, but it feels selfish to say that."

Patients & Survivors

"I love my partner, but touch feels different now."

"I want to feel close but I don't want sex."

"I don't feel like myself anymore."

"I'm glad I'm alive, but I miss what cancer changed?"

"My partner and I don't know how to be close anymore."



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**When these concerns don't get addressed in care,
people make meaning of it.**

shame

fear

inadequacy

isolation

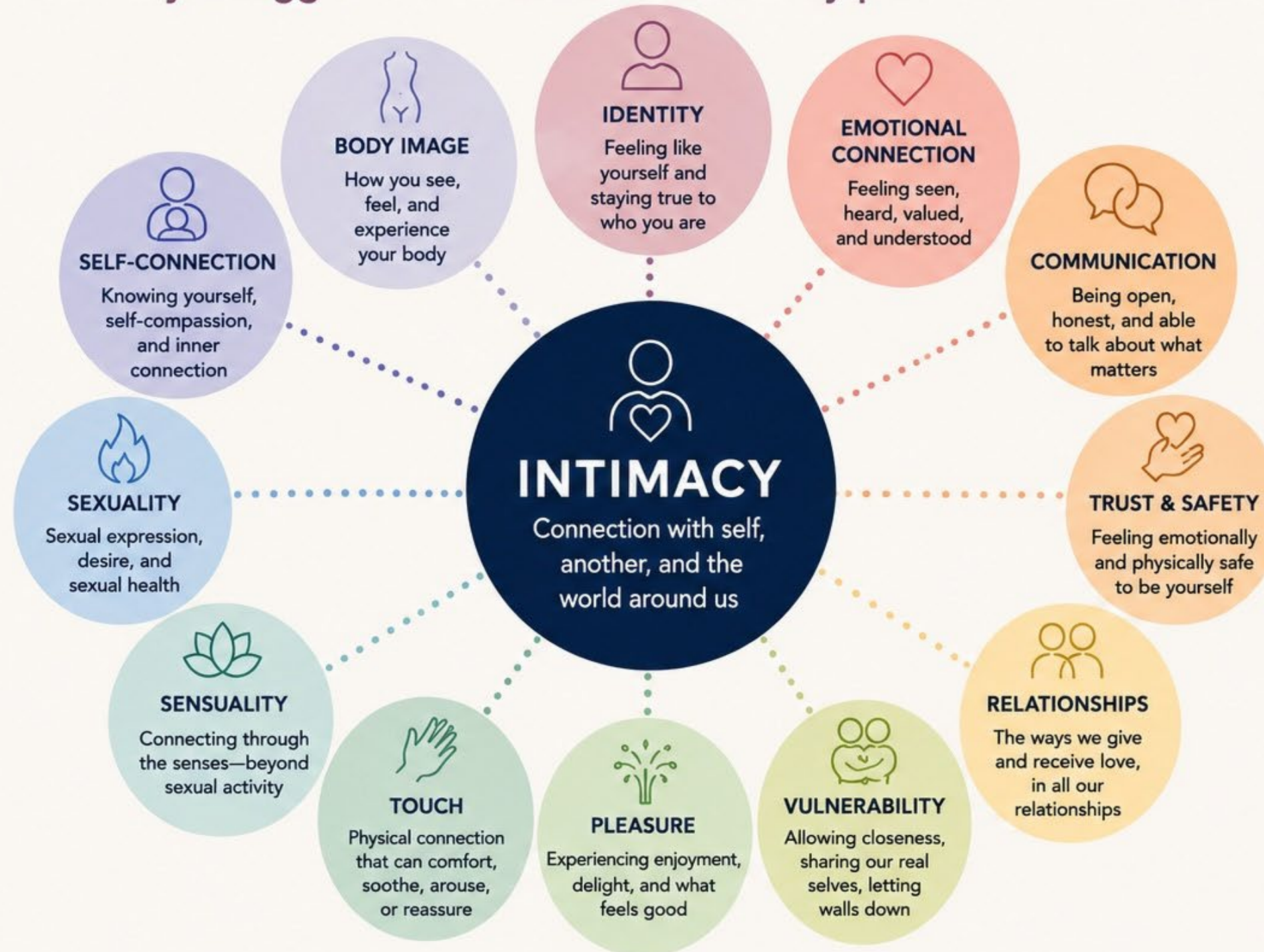
relationship tension

avoidance

“something must be wrong with me/us”

A Bigger Map of Intimacy

Intimacy is bigger than sex. It touches every part of how we connect.



There is no single right way to be intimate

What we need, want, and have access to can change throughout cancer and throughout life.

Connection

Affection

Touch

Sensuality

Sexuality

Conversation

Shared Activities

...and so much more!



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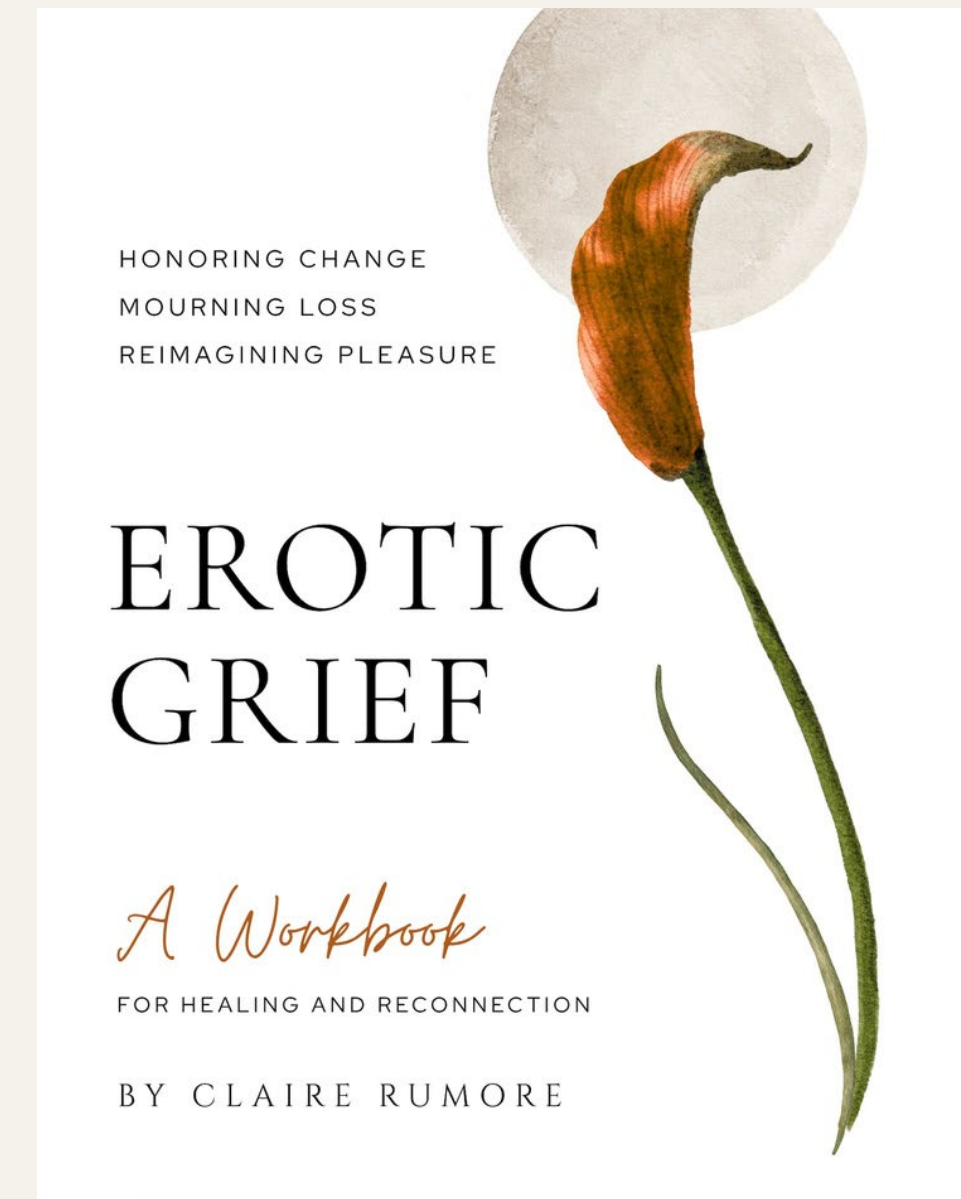
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Sometimes there is real loss.

EROTIC GRIEF

Grief for what cancer has changed or taken away in our bodies, sexuality, pleasure, identity, and intimate lives.

A Familiar Body • Sensation • Desire • Sexual Function
Fertility • Confidence • A Former Sex Life
Ease With A Partner



From Performance to Exploration



PERFORMANCE

Can I still do this?

Is my body working?

Can we have sex like we used to?

Did I get the “right” response?

Where is this touch leading?



EXPLORATION

What feels good now?

What is my body responding to?

What kind of connection do we want now?

What did I enjoy or discover?

Can this touch simply feel good?

Three Places to Begin

NOTICE

Pay attention to what you want and need now.

What feels good? What do I miss? What am I curious about?

COMMUNICATE

Talk about what has changed.

“I’m not sure what I want yet, but we can figure it out together.”

EXPERIMENT

Try something without expectations.

What feels good now?



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Questions to Take With You

Erotic Grief

◆ What has changed?

◆ What do I miss?

Libido Listening

◆ What feels good?

Libido Liberation

◆ What do I want now?

◆ What would I like to try?



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Intimacy-Informed Cancer Care Makes Room for All of This

It recognizes that intimacy is part of whole-person care.

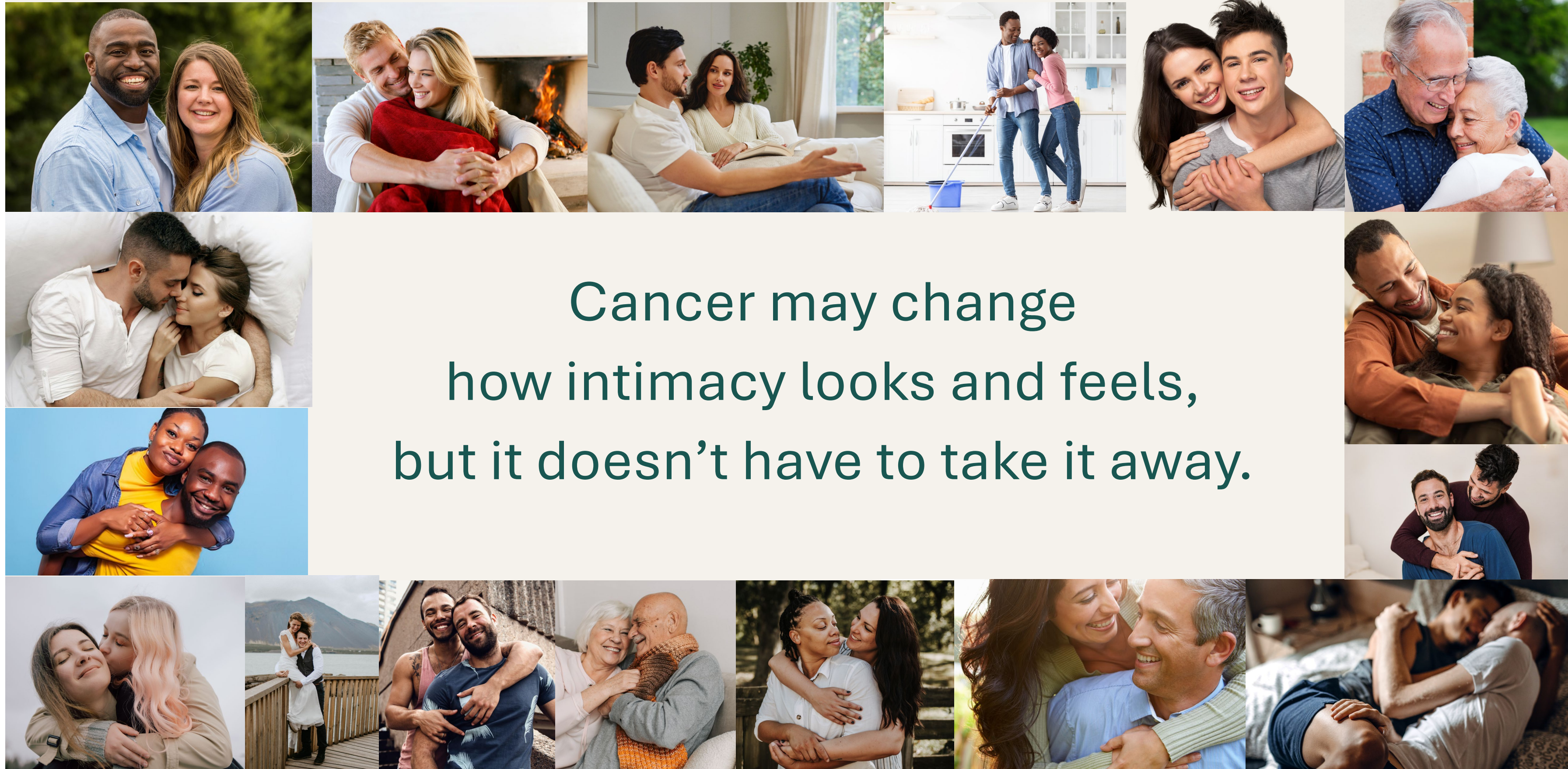
- ★ Makes it easier to talk about tender topics
- ★ Normalizes common experiences and reduces isolation
- ★ Offers support and helpful resources throughout the cancer experience
- ★ Connects patients with more targeted intervention and specialist care when needed



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Let's connect!

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site for patients, survivors, and their partners

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organizational consulting & implementation

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