



Mary's story: Becoming 'me' again

Mary is a retired nurse, devoted grandmother, hiking enthusiast and world traveler. After she was diagnosed with breast cancer a year ago, she felt as though she'd been stripped of each of these important layers of her identity and left with a new, one-dimensional label as a "sick person." Her treatment left her with little energy to do the things she loved most and she struggled with feelings of sadness and helplessness.

Enter Mary's palliative care team: Not only did they address her fatigue, they provided her with mental health support and listened to her goals. "They want to make sure I'm living my life as fully as I can," Mary said.

Mary is now planning a getaway to the Oregon Coast. She can often be found on urban trails with her husband or local playgrounds with her grandchildren. She reported, "I may still be 'sick,' but I feel like myself again."



Heather's story: Prevailing over pain

Heather was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. It started out as what she thought was a kidney infection and evolved into debilitating pain throughout her whole body. She soon reached a point when she needed help getting out of bed in the morning.

This shook Heather to her core. She was a self-described "type A personality," who lived an active life as a wife, mother to two sons and dedicated professional at a nonprofit organization. She felt completely stuck behind a roadblock that was impossible to remove.

Enter Heather's palliative care team: They listened to her full story and helped her focus on what she could control in her life. They worked to calm her nerves and manage her pain. They also included her husband and children in her care.

Each day has its own challenges and Heather's needs change as her illness progresses, but her palliative care team is there to support her throughout it all. "I just can't imagine life without them."



John's story: Feeling empowered

John has lived with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) for many years, and his condition has worsened in recent years. His daughter became concerned about him and moved him into a long-term care facility two years ago.

His new home provided John with extra support and stability, but something was still missing. He struggled with keeping up with the treatment recommended by his pulmonologist; he had trouble sleeping; he constantly felt out of breath; he fell into a state of depression; and he felt completely powerless.

Enter John's palliative care team: They worked with John and his daughter to navigate and coordinate his medical care, ensuring that everyone involved in John's care was on the same page. They helped him discover therapies and medications to relieve his discomfort from shortness of breath and supported him in making lifestyle changes to feel his best. They educated him about his disease and kept him fully informed of his treatment options.

"I now understand what's going on," John said. "I just take it all one step at a time. It isn't easy, but I finally feel like I've got some wind back in my sails again."