

Welcome back to BRIGHTLIGHT!

This newsletter is filled with updates of what's been happening with the study over the last six months

We've got lots to tell you about how your participation continues to make a difference to improving cancer care for young people.

Thank you for staying with us.

It's a wrap...

With recruitment drawing to a close we're proud to announce we have reached a gigantic total of 1100 young people with cancer from all over England taking part in the study! This is a huge achievement for all of you that are taking part, a certificate is making its way in the post to you.

Young Advisory Panel (YAP)

Our YAP have been busy with all sorts over the last six months - we can't keep up! In case you missed them, watch Maria and Zeena at the Find Your Sense of Tumour Conference rocking that stage in November 2014!



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Our YAP help in many ways and if you think this might be something you want to be involved in come along and meet them at our next workshop! Details below...

SAVE THE DATE

SEPT

2015

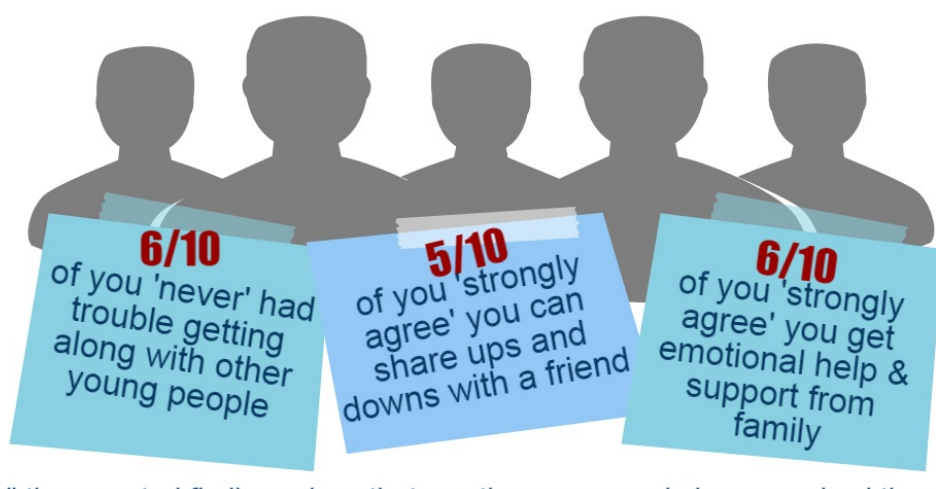
It's that time again.... BRIGHTLIGHT workshop here we come. This autumn the focus of our workshop is to ask you how you would like to see the findings of this study published.

If you would like to attend, please contact us to register your interest. We'll cover all your travel and food costs, and you will also receive a LOVE2SHOP voucher for your time. Places are limited so please enquire early.



Emerging Findings

A huge chunk of our survey asks you about relationships and social support from friends and family during your cancer treatment here's what you told us....



Overall the reported findings show that mostly young people have received the support needed. However, cancer can certainly change relationships with existing friends or family and often you may new discover new ones. Read Josh's story on the next page about how cancer affected his relationships.

Adapting Relationships

Josh is one of our YAP members and blogger of 'Livin' with Lymphoma'. He shares his story about relationships since receiving his diagnosis.

People will always be coming and going from your life. This is just a normal thing that happens, and everyone should be prepared for it. You hope that there will always be those staple members, like your family, who you can rely on unconditionally, but there will be plenty of others that appear and vanish like some kind of strange magic trick.

Unfortunately, from my experience, cancer accelerates this process. During my two-year journey so far, my friendship group has drastically changed, I have been tossed aside by a significant other and somehow met a new one along the way. Cancer changes so many aspects of your life, so it's only natural that **relationships** are affected too. There are many things that I used to do with my friends that I can no longer keep up with.

Let's find an example - I can't drink **alcohol** while on treatment. This caused a shift in the type of relationship I had with my friends. Some didn't want to drink if I wasn't able to drink, changing the type of things we would do together. Not everybody shared this ideology and I gradually lost contact with a few old friends, as we lost that mutual activity. For those who did stick around, including a couple of surprising new additions, we meet up for film nights, play board games and just chat. Our relationships have adapted around cancer.

Romantically speaking, it isn't as simple. Like many people, I had a relationship that was heavily built around physical attraction. Cancer causes both **emotional and physical** changes. After just 6 months of treatment, I had put on 15 kg, I was completely bald and had terrible self-esteem. I would look in the mirror and not recognise myself, instead turning to my partner for reassurance. One day, our relationship changed - the physical connection was broken. We shortly broke up, and I continued onwards with my cancer journey, alone.

Almost a year later, I am writing this. I'm now 18 months through my treatment, still 15 kg heavier and balder than ever and somehow I have a new boyfriend. It was a massive shock, and the timing couldn't have been worse. At the time we met, I was just days away from starting my next chemotherapy, but we managed to form an emotional connection.

The best thing though, is that this is the first relationship that I haven't had to change around cancer. It's a relationship that has formed naturally despite the **cancer experience**, and I couldn't be happier about how things are going.

Cancer is an obstacle to many things in life, that's for certain. Don't let it stop you in your tracks. Find a new way around it, and things will fall right into place.

Josh



Feedback on our newsletter or send us your story. CONTACT details below:



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