



A Journey of Courage and Hope

PLANNING A METASTATIC BREAST CANCER RETREAT

Program Agendas and Activity Planning Ideas

Pictures are for illustrative purposes only — not actual patients or retreat locations.



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This kit only provides some considerations for planning purposes and does not necessarily take into account all requirements. Each organization planning these retreats is responsible for ensuring it complies with all applicable state, federal, and local laws and regulations, including HIPAA.

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Content Note

Agendas and planning guidance serve as a basic framework for retreat activities and can be modified as needed.

There are program variations among the different retreats. While each retreat has distinctions related to the needs of the unique participant groups, there are many similarities in theme and overall content among the retreats.

NOTE: If you are interested in hosting a **virtual retreat**, you may use these agendas as a guide, but schedules will vary depending on digital capabilities.

SECTION 1

Sample Program Agendas

- 1-Day Program Agenda
- 3-Day Program Agenda

Please note that these agendas are examples. Modify as needed for your specific retreat type.

SAMPLE 1-DAY PROGRAM AGENDA

DAY/TIME	SESSION
SATURDAY	
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	CHECK-IN AND BREAKFAST
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Opening session and group discussion on defining the retreat experience
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Medical oncology Q&A
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	LUNCH
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	“Humor Is the Best Medicine”
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	“Spirituality and Hope in the Cancer Journey” Introduction to self-reflection/nature walk
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Self-reflection/nature walk Follow-up discussion
4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.	Final sharing and words of reflection
4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Feedback and takeaways Goodbyes

Refer to the agenda for a 3-day retreat for additional ideas on activities that can be adapted for your 1-day retreat.

SAMPLE 3-DAY PROGRAM AGENDA

Day/Time	Session
FRIDAY	
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Check-in and free time
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	DINNER
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Opening session
SATURDAY	
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	BREAKFAST
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Opening lecture (e.g., talk given by a guest speaker on her mBC experience)
10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	BREAK
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Breakout group discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women with metastatic breast cancer only• Spouses/partners/caregivers only
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	LUNCH
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Full group discussion
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Free time OR Yoga and meditation OR Massage sessions
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Medical oncology Q&A
6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	DINNER AND FREE TIME
7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Evening program: humor, games, and activities
SUNDAY	
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	BREAKFAST
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Checkout
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Massage sessions
9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	“Spirituality and Hope in the Cancer Journey” Introduction to self-reflection/nature walk
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Self-reflection/nature walk Follow-up discussion
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	LUNCH
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Final sharing and closing activity
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Evaluation Goodbyes

Activity Planning

SECTION 2

- Friday Activities
 - Check In/Dinner
 - Opening Session
- Saturday Activities
 - Opening Lecture
 - Group Discussion
 - Free Time and Optional Recreational Activities
 - Medical Oncology Q&A
 - Evening Program
- Sunday Activities
 - Reflection and Spirituality
 - Closing Session
- Additional Activities and Elements

Please note that not every activity may apply to every retreat

CHECK IN / DINNER

Activity Details and Facilitation Guidance

Participants are instructed to arrive prior to the 7 p.m. start time of the first session. This allows them time to check into their rooms and settle in for the next 3 days (registration opens at 4 p.m.). Participants are given a tote bag and folder containing handouts of the Participant Agenda, which lists the times of sessions, faculty and room locations, the objectives, and a description of the staff. Journals and pens are provided for use throughout the weekend. You may choose to include books on metastatic breast cancer and living with cancer as well (Please see the Appendix resource included in this kit).

The staff is present throughout the afternoon to greet attendees, provide information, and solve potential logistical problems (accommodating patients who need time for rest, providing a sofa to lie on rather than a chair if a participant is experiencing pain, etc.). Upon arrival, patients are often anxious about meeting new people or attending an unfamiliar event. Uncertainty is an issue that can be addressed by the staff, who should intervene with reassurance and a warm welcome.

Dinner is served in a dining hall where participants and staff are seated together at 6 p.m. This is where most participants first meet one another. As participants begin sharing, the group dynamics start to form right away. The program formally begins that evening soon after dinner. This initial gathering gives the group an opportunity to learn more about each other and the program. While there is structure to providing information, it is a relaxed setting. This evening time can serve the group well in that trust begins to develop within the group and relationships start to form. In addition, when introductions are taken care of that first evening, the schedule can include more free time the next day.

OPENING SESSION: WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS

Activity Details and Facilitation Guidance

- Participants introduce themselves/their partners (if applicable) by name and their connection/relationship and answer the question: How long have you been dealing with metastatic breast cancer?
 - If attending with a partner or caregiver, ask the participant to describe the qualities of the person with whom they are attending (list on flip chart)
- Ask participants to provide 1 to 3 words to describe their cancer journey (list descriptions on flip chart)
- Facilitators, volunteers, and massage therapist briefly introduce themselves and their roles

OBJECTIVES	METHOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet participants through simple introductions• Start to establish trust and relationships• Introduce the use of story as part of the experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group discussion
	PRESENTER
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retreat director/facilitator, staff and massage therapist.

OPENING SESSION: DEFINE RETREAT AS A GROUP

Activity Details and Facilitation Guidance

- Definition of retreat: Retreats are a time away from the everyday routine. Responsibilities are left behind and replaced with time for oneself. It is a time for thoughts, feelings, reflection, and sharing
- Retreats are weekend events that offer an opportunity to address issues surrounding metastatic breast cancer as well as meet other couples dealing with the impact of the disease and its treatment. Provide history and objectives for the retreat
- Participants have an opportunity to share and to listen. Explain the importance of listening
- Participants will be supported throughout this weekend by facilitators and by each other
- Ask participants what would be helpful to make the retreat effective, sharing and listing possible answers like:
 - Turn off cell phones
 - What is said at the retreat should stay at the retreat
 - Share only what they are comfortable sharing
 - Time for all to speak (emphasize listening)
 - Timeliness of sessions
 - Option for sitting out a session
 - Use facilitators for support beyond the group as needed
 - Encourage networking
 - Burning questions
 - Breaks

OBJECTIVES	METHOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group defines the retreat with the direction of the facilitator• Group describes expectations• Ensure that the retreat is a safe place and that it feels that way to the participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questions and discussion flip chart (plan to return to the list at the end of the retreat to determine if the group’s expectations were met)• Participants provide feedback about how the retreat can be as effective and meaningful as possible

PRESENTER

- Retreat director/facilitator, and staff

OPENING SESSION: PROGRAM INFORMATION, HOUSEKEEPING

Activity Details and Facilitation Guidance

- Review agenda: schedule of topics, speakers, facilitator’s role, etc.
 - Content of folders/tote bags
 - Objectives, program evaluation, books, and journals for note taking
 - History of retreat
 - Program content is optional (if one would like to skip a session to rest or be alone, it’s okay)
 - Massage sessions explained by massage therapist; scheduling a session explained by program coordinator
 - Purpose of program evaluation and surveys
 - Health issues
 - Features of facility
 - Specific facility requests
- Q&A

OBJECTIVES	METHOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue the information sharing about the program• Provide specific instructions for use of facility, logistics, program, etc.• Provide opportunity for participants to ask questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion, Q&A
PRESENTER	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retreat director/facilitator, staff and massage therapist.	

OPENING LECTURE

An opening lecture given by a guest speaker that may cover topics including:

- Information specific to metastatic breast cancer experience
- Information specific to couples and caregivers coping, relating, and communicating
- Group Q&A

OBJECTIVES	METHOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide perspective and insights of couples, caregivers, and women who have been dealing with metastatic breast cancer together with the goal of leading to further shared concerns and discussion points• Offer time for group to settle in and focus on listening and relating• Provide information that leads to opening the discussions in next sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening lecture (informational, relatable, and entertaining)• Slide presentation• Discussion
	PRESENTER
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guest speaker

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Activity Details and Facilitation Guidance

- Opening question may be: of all the things you are currently dealing with regarding metastatic breast cancer, what is your greatest fear?*
- Other open-ended questions may include
 - Where do you find your strength?
 - How are things at home?
 - How are you preparing for the future?
- Questions that patients should consider discussing with their care team:
 - How much do I know about my cancer?
 - How much do I want to know about my cancer?
 - What am I currently hoping for?
 - What am I most worried about right now?
 - What are three things that bring me joy?
- Possible issues: compassion, fatigue, personal feelings, challenges to relationships, body image, pain, sexuality, communication, change in lifestyle, children, and life after death for family and friends
- Common topics for women and spouses/partners:
 - Fear of dying in pain, suffering, and lack of dignity (women)
 - Fear of being forgotten by young children (women)
 - Fear of inability to move forward after loved one’s death (partners)
 - Fear of losing control (women and partners)
- Survivor spouse/partner: relate personal experience and answer questions group may pose
- Full group discussion: content will very based on needs of overall group and prior group discussion content

*See Appendix A on page 18 for an activity on addressing greatest fears

BREAK OUT AND OPENING GROUP DISCUSSION




OBJECTIVES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss issues common to women with metastatic breast cancer OR discuss issues common to caregivers of women with metastatic breast cancer• Identify needs of women dealing with metastatic breast cancer and their perspective on the needs of their caregivers and families OR identify needs of the caregiver and family and discover commonality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discover strengths and resources within the group and beyond• Discover preparing for the future• For Couples Retreats: offer a survivor and spouse/partner as a resource and witness to life beyond loss of partner	
METHOD	PRESENTER	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitator-led group discussion• Introduce a survivor spouse/partner into the discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retreat director/facilitator• Survivor spouse/partner	

FULL GROUP DISCUSSION AND DEBRIEF

OBJECTIVES	METHOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summarize the earlier separate group discussions• Promote group discussion on the topics identified separately• Discover commonality and differences, strengths, and insights within the larger group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitator-led group discussion
	PRESENTER
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitator with survivor spouse/partner

FREE TIME AND OPTIONAL RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Complementary well being activities are beneficial offerings in the retreat setting and in keeping with the theory that the retreat is time away to take care of oneself emotionally and physically. It is an active way to be in the present moment. The program may offer massage and/or Reiki, yoga, and meditation. If the massage therapist is certified in healing touch and couples massage, it is especially beneficial for the couples retreat. Depending on your resources, various other complementary well being activities may be used. Incorporate the services into the program so that the day’s activities are varied, and the services are part of the agenda meeting course objectives.

-  **Free time:** Optional free time may include but is not limited to: walking, light exercise, swimming, napping, networking with others, and using the special spaces of the facility
-  **Yoga:** Yoga with music/story/quiet (possibly offer different forms of yoga throughout the weekend)
-  **Massage sessions:** Individual massage therapy offered by massage therapist

MEDICAL ONCOLOGY Q&A

A medical oncology question and answer session that may cover topics such as:

- Treatment
- Clinical trials
- Disease progression
- Goals of treatment
- Decision making
- Scientific research
- Future of breast cancer treatment
- Contacts for clinical trials

Make it clear to participants that the information provided in this section is for their background only and not medical advice. They should talk with their own oncologist for advice specific to their condition.

OBJECTIVES	METHOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A medical oncologist or oncology researcher will provide information about metastatic breast cancer, cancer treatment, and clinical trials, and will answer participant questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medical oncologist will lead discussion, offering information and facilitating a Q&A session
	PRESENTER
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medical oncologist (specializing in breast cancer)

EVENING PROGRAM: HUMOR IS THE BEST MEDICINE





After a long day, the evening program is intended to be light and playfully humorous. Offer a question and answer session similar to The Newlywed Game™ game show from the 1970s. Asking questions and guessing their partners’ responses is fun and another way for participants to share their personal stories. Participants may share how they met one another. Couples often recall their first encounters with fondness as if it were yesterday. The stories they share can transport the group back in time and allow the other participants to know the couple in a different light. The evening should be filled with laughter and time to relax as new friends.

For a revealing and somewhat more serious moment, ask 1 question related to coping with metastatic breast cancer. It is a straightforward question, but introduces an awareness of an often unspoken personal truth: *of the two of you, who is more worried about you?* The answer is often a surprise to each partner.

Note the changes in behavior and how body language and interactions completely alter with the addition of humor. Enjoy!

OBJECTIVES	METHOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Relaxation in an informal and social settingUse humor as a means of relieving stressProvide an opportunity for laughter in a weekend of serious topicsLearn about participants from a different perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Storytelling through playing gamesHumor in a relaxed setting
	PRESENTER
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Retreat director/facilitator

EVENING PROGRAM ACTIVITY IDEAS:

-  Interactive acting out and/or guessing games
-  Puzzles
-  Word games
-  Funny stories based on prompts

REFLECTION AND SPIRITUALITY

A formal session on hope and spirituality is designed for the participants to discuss personal interpretations and meanings of the spiritual nature of their lives and their experiences with cancer. This session is led by an oncology center chaplain. He/she asks the group a series of questions to help define the many aspects of spirituality. Spirituality can be religion, nature, belief in a higher power, purpose, and much more. The participants are encouraged to use their own definitions and personal interpretations (when a participant refers to his/her religious faith, then it is recognized as personal). Much of the discussion is describing hope in the context of their lives. This powerful discussion aims to help the participants find meaning in their struggles and to define hope in the context of their life experiences.

The discussion is followed by an explanation of the nature walk and the reflective walk begins. After the time in nature, the group members return to share their experiences.

OBJECTIVES	METHOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define spirituality• Discuss meaning of hope and its place in this stage of the disease and life• Relate spirituality to everyday coping and living• Provide information and explanation about self-reflection and the nature walk• Encourage participants to be in the moment and fully experience the event• Experience nature in a reflective state• Share your experience in a group setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lecture/discussion (use flip chart to list definitions)• Guided/facilitated nature walk• Discussion and debriefing
	PRESENTER
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oncology chaplain or spiritual guide

CLOSING SESSION: FINAL SHARING

Activity Details and Facilitation Guidance

- Review the definition of retreat the group developed at the first gathering (listed on flip chart)
- Ask the participants to reply in 1 sentence to this question: What will you take away from this retreat weekend?
- Offer facilitator’s impression of the participants, their experiences, and the feelings created (strength, courage, respect, etc.)
- Discuss a final take home message: don’t postpone joy
 - Encourage patients and their loved ones to not delay a vacation, trip, purchases, etc. If they can afford it, go soon while she is feeling well enough and will enjoy it the most
 - Remind them that these are the memories they can look back on with shared joy
 - If financial ability is the barrier to creating this joyful experience now, see about investigating the possibility of an advocacy organization helping

CLOSING SESSION ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- **Activity 1: Metaphor and Legacy Work**
 - Read or paraphrase the poem by Henry Van Dyke, “Gone From My Sight” (See Appendix B on page 19)
 - Display of vessels (vases), journals, rocks, sea glass, shells, etc. to metaphorically explain the task of recording memories with a purpose (See Appendix C on page 20)
- **Activity 2: Metaphor and Symbolism**
 - Read chapter “Pearl of Wisdom” by Rachel Remen from *My Grandfather’s Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge, and Belonging* in which a pearl comes from an oyster that lives in the sand, and wisdom comes from the struggle for the women. Each person may receive a (faux) pearl bracelet as a symbol of wisdom related to the chapter reading (See Appendix D on page 20)
 - Write letters to spouses, caregivers, and/or women recently diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer. Read letters aloud or alone, or deliver to patients in a clinic
 - Option to consider butterfly release to emphasize life’s cycle (seasonal option)
- **Evaluation and Goodbye’s**
 - Completion and collection of evaluations
 - Exchange contact information/provide group’s contact information
 - Goodbye’s, hugs, farewells

Participants often form bonds during the retreat and want to stay in contact once the weekend is over. At the close of the retreat, ask for someone among the attendees to volunteer to take the lead on setting up a closed Facebook page. On the retreat sign in sheet (located in the Appendix resource), have the participants sign their initials next to their email address to signify they would like to participate.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ELEMENTS: OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Courage collage activity

- Using symbolism and art, participants create a mask that reveals how they function in the world and who they are.
- Discussion on the meaning of the masks and their function is a metaphor for oneself and the cancer journey.
- Wrap up the activity with sharing and guided discussion that reveals more of the individual story and personal interpretation of the external self and the internal self.

Nature walk

- This is a timeless practice for self-reflection and the pursuit of a spiritual experience. Time set aside for quiet reflection can have a lasting impact on the participants.
- An oncology chaplain oversees this part of the program. He or she provides insights into the importance and purpose of self-reflection, as well as advice for how to make the most out of this time in nature. Each chaplain’s approach can be different — the goal is that the participants begin the walk with an open mind and feeling comfortable.
- After the chaplain has facilitated the group walk, it is important to spend time sharing individual experiences.

Labyrinth walk

- The labyrinth is an ancient symbol, a metaphor, and a tool for a psychosocial and possibly spiritual experience.
- A labyrinth description and walk can be incorporated into the program in the spirituality session. The walk is facilitated by the oncology chaplain. The chaplain describes how the labyrinth is a path with a beginning, middle, and end. Although it seems to meander, it has a purposeful path. He/she then facilitates the group walk and spends time afterward in group discussion where individuals share their experiences. The labyrinth can be a metaphor for life’s journey, a spiritual experience, and an activity to repeat.
- For retreat facilitators who are interested in this activity, it is important to reserve a location near a labyrinth. To locate labyrinths across the country, visit labyrinthlocator.com.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ELEMENTS: ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER

Gathering to meditation bells

- An easy and calming way to get the group’s attention is to gently ring meditation bells. Establish a routine of ringing, deep breathing, and then beginning each session. Here is one technique:
 - Describe the importance of centering oneself and the entire group
 - Ring meditation bells once, allowing the sound to end on its own
 - Instruct participants to sit quietly, slowly and deeply inhaling and exhaling when the bell is rung again
 - Ring meditation bells and practice breathing as the ring diminishes
 - Encourage the participants to center their focus on breathing
 - Explain that this is a practice that will be continued with the start of each session

Informal discussions

- Informal discussions and networking among couples and individuals are encouraged throughout the retreat at breaks and mealtimes. Specific topics may be identified and selected by participants, such as coping, sexuality, finding strength, and preparing for the future and end of life. These conversations can even continue in the group setting. Participants often remain in contact after the retreat has ended.

Burning questions

- Provide index cards for burning questions, program suggestions, difficult or challenging issues, etc. Use a box to anonymously collect the cards throughout the weekend. The option to remain anonymous may allow patients to discuss difficult issues. Provide a specific time to answer questions or incorporate answers into appropriate sessions.

Breaks

- The retreat topics can be sensitive and emotional. Break time is essential for participants to restore their energy and take time to understand what is being felt and experienced. Some patients may also be in pain and need time to medicate or lie down.
- Participants have the options of attending sessions, resting, or visiting areas of the facility at any time throughout the weekend, although participating in the program is the most encouraged. Facilitators need to be cognizant of the discomforts related to symptoms of metastatic breast cancer with regard to time spent sitting, how comfortable the furniture is, and the endurance capacity of various participants.

Storytelling

- The need for participants to tell their personal stories is quite evident at every retreat. Individuals want to share what they have experienced — as well as what they want to learn about each other’s stories. Storytelling is about finding meaning and connecting with one another. When planning a retreat, plan for discussion time to allow participants to share their personal stories. Remind participants to share and listen to others in their informal discussions, such as at mealtimes and breaks.

Appendix

SECTION 3

- Appendix A: Greeting Cards for Patients to Leave for Their Children
- Appendix B: Gone From My Sight Poem
- Appendix C: Obtaining Memory Ships for Vessels Activity
- Appendix D: Obtaining Pearl Bracelets

APPENDIX A: GREETING CARDS FOR PATIENTS TO LEAVE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Some of the most common fears that are discussed by patients is the fear of leaving their children behind, being forgotten by their children, not being here to instill values or give them advice, and not being able to tell them what they are hoping for them as they achieve milestones in their lives. This is where the cards come in.

Patients get to select cards to take home that they will write for each of their children (or in some cases their grandchildren) to receive on each significant milestone moment that occurs. Getting their driver's license, confirmation or other religious ceremony like bar mitzvah, high school graduation, turning 21, college graduation, first job, first promotion, wedding, when they have their own first baby. These are all significant times in a child's life that a mother will miss being present for, however through the words she writes in these cards she actually IS "still here."

Cards are expensive and you will want really nice quality cards for these patients to select and take home to write in. Some methods of obtaining supplies of these cards are:

- Do a card drive at work
- Engage scrapbook clubs to make cards and donate them. Commonly such crafters gather monthly so perhaps they could dedicate one meeting a year to making such cards for your retreats
- Use money from your retreat budget to purchase cards at a greeting card store
- Meet with the greeting card store managers and see if they would be willing to donate cards
- Request a philanthropic donor to either provide the money to purchase the cards or even go shopping to purchase the actual cards themselves

Be sure to organize the cards by type of milestone event and place them in shoebox storage units, clearly labeled.

There needs to be a "Keeper of the Cards" on behalf of the patient. This could be her spouse or sister, or someone else she is close to. These cards also need to be stored inside of a fireproof and waterproof safe, because remember, they are not replaceable.

APPENDIX B: GONE FROM MY SIGHT POEM

GONE FROM MY SIGHT

By Henry Van Dyke

I am standing upon the seashore. A ship, at my side
spreads her white sails to the moving breeze and starts
for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength.
I stand and watch her until, at length, she hangs like a speck
of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.

Then, someone at my side says, 'There, she is gone.'

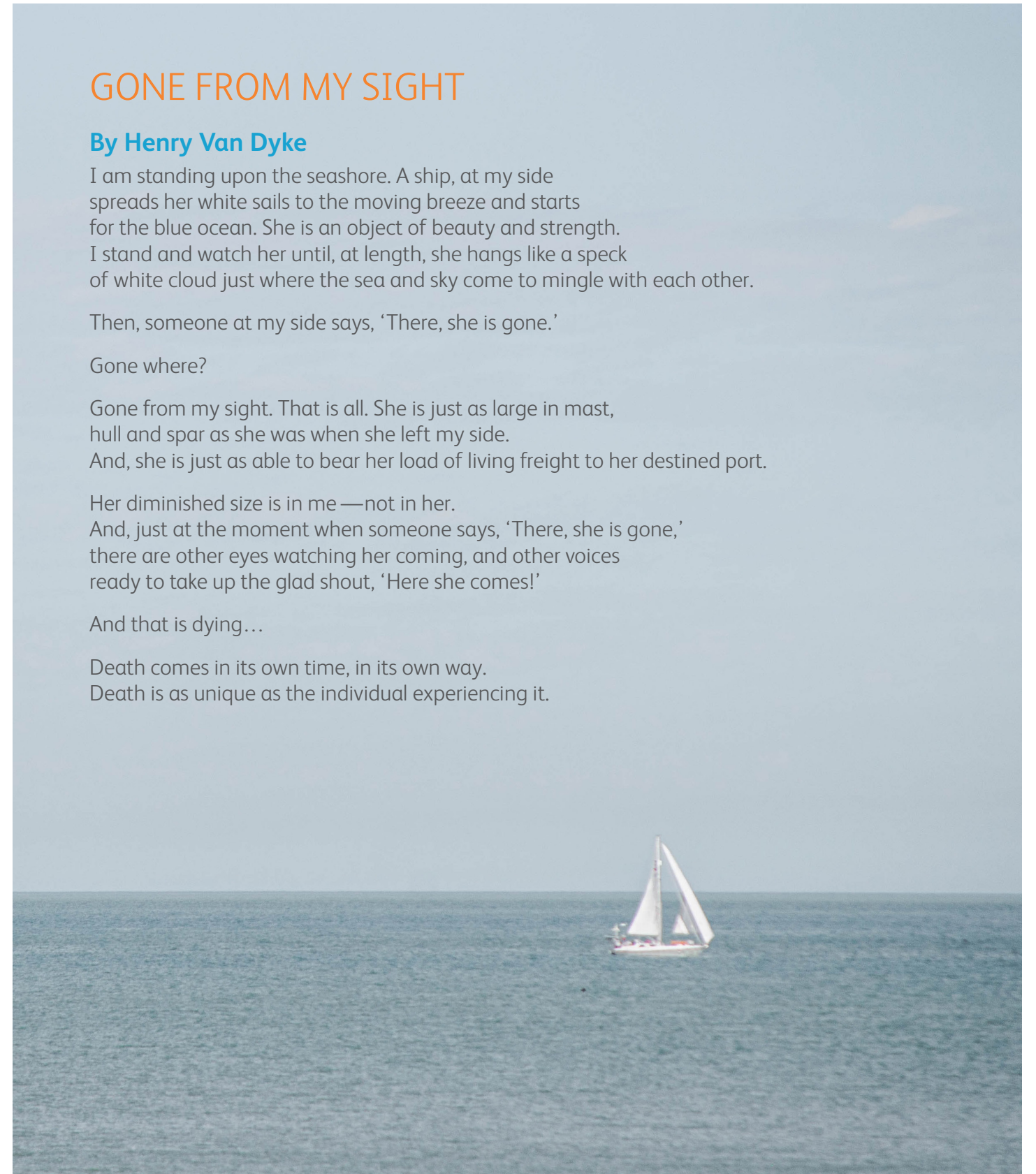
Gone where?

Gone from my sight. That is all. She is just as large in mast,
hull and spar as she was when she left my side.
And, she is just as able to bear her load of living freight to her destined port.

Her diminished size is in me —not in her.
And, just at the moment when someone says, 'There, she is gone,'
there are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices
ready to take up the glad shout, 'Here she comes!'

And that is dying...

Death comes in its own time, in its own way.
Death is as unique as the individual experiencing it.



APPENDIX C: OBTAINING MEMORY SHIPS FOR VESSELS ACTIVITY

When looking for vessels to use for this activity, keep the following in mind:

- Use something that is a large vase or large candle holder - remember, all of her “happy memories” are filling this container so you don’t want it to be too small
- They should be visually appealing
- They should be made of glass
- Ideally nautical themed in some way – color of the ocean, sea décor, mosaic glass that is in green/blue, etc.
- A lid should not be included
- Watch for sales in mid-summer at department stores that are getting rid of coastal/nautical items

Watch the video from the Couples Retreat and you will see examples of the memory ships toward the end of that filming.

APPENDIX D: OBTAINING PEARL BRACELETS

The excerpt “Pearls of Wisdom” comes from the book *My Grandfather’s Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge, and Belonging* by Rachel Remen

Pearl bracelets are a part of the retreat that is designed for patients and female caregivers to attend. The theme is “Pearls of Wisdom” and the intent of this symbol is for the patients and their accompanying female caregiver to experience, give, and receive pearls of wisdom from one another throughout the course of the retreat.

When a patient voices a solution to a challenge they face or gives wise advice, this inspires others around them to do the same. When these “pearls of wisdom” are shared, the participant that shared should receive a physical (faux) pearl.

When the patient passes away, it is hoped that her female caregiver will wear her pearl bracelet in her memory.

There are several ways to obtain these bracelets:

1. Some patient advocacy organizations may be willing to provide pearl bracelets
2. A grateful patient may want to donate either the funds or the actual bracelets for your retreat
3. Meet with jewelers and see if they would be willing to provide them at cost
4. Watch for sales online or at department stores

Whenever asking a potential donor to provide the funding or to purchase the bracelets and provide them as an in-kind donation, be sure to provide them with the information above as well as the story about the life of an oyster, which provides the wonderful symbolism of an oyster creating a pearl inside of itself as an outcome of pain and suffering.



Pictures are for illustrative purposes only — not actual patients or retreat locations.

