

# Phase 2 pilot study of Pathfinders, a psychosocial intervention for cancer patients

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**Condensed abstract:** Pathfinders, a multi-faceted psychosocial care program for cancer patients, was feasible and helpful to patients in the academic clinic setting. The intervention had significant impact on psychosocial measures, notably distress and despair.

## **Abstract**

**Purpose:** Pathfinders is a multi-faceted psychosocial care program for cancer patients; it was developed in community oncology and adapted to the academic oncology setting. This prospective, single-arm, Phase 2 pilot study examined the acceptability and feasibility of Pathfinders for women with metastatic breast cancer.

**Methods:** Over 3 months, participants completed patient-reported surveys including the Patient Care Monitor (PCM, review of systems), Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Breast Cancer (FACT-B), Self Efficacy, and a single-item survey asking whether patients whether the program was helpful to them. A technology-based data collection system was used to capture electronic patient-reported outcomes at point of care, report symptoms in real time to clinicians, and warehouse data to provide a detailed longitudinal picture of the patient experience when receiving Pathfinders.

**Results:** Participants (n=50) were: mean age 51 (SD 11); 76% white, 20% black; 74% married; 50% college degree. Forty-two (n=42) patients completed baseline and 3-month assessments. Statistically significant improvements (all  $P < .05$ ) occurred in PCM subscales for Distress (mean [SE]: -3.42 [1.21]), Despair (-4.53 [1.56]), and Quality of Life (2.88 [0.97]), and the FACT-B Emotional Wellbeing subscale (2.07 [0.46]). Of the 29 participants asked if Pathfinders was helpful, 27 (93%) responded positively and 2 did not respond. Other instruments measuring symptoms, quality of life and self-efficacy showed improvement.

**Conclusions:** In a Phase 2 pilot study, Pathfinders was helpful to patients, and is feasible in an academic medical center. Follow-up data collected at the 3-month assessment suggest that the program impacts various psychological outcomes, notably distress and despair.