



HEY GIRL!

Winter 2018
Issue 2
Hey Girl!
is a quarterly
publication of
SISTA AH Talk
Miami, FL



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Hey Girl!
is published to keep
you informed about
our programs,
activities, and the
experiences of breast
cancer survivors in
South Florida

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November 2017

SISTA AH S Weekend Retreat Deloris Smith Johnson, SISTA AH Talk Historian



PIC-COLLAGE

'UM JUST SAYIN...

What's a Sistaah to Do?

Mary S. Whitehead, MPH, CHES
SISTA AH Talk Facilitator



Hurricane preparation is as stressful as it is important. We focus on preparation of physical dwellings and personal safety. Rarely is the fragility of our emotional state a top priority. During Hurricane Irma my family relocated. I was faced with making decisions, which could affect my entire life. The anxiety of it all created a sense of confusion, anger, and sadness. It helped to know, as the American Psychological Association notes, if kept in check, these feelings are real, normal and healthy. God is my shelter.

He shields me even in the fiercest storm. Yet, when the rain stopped and the winds ceased, the destruction at home awaited me. The physical cleanup of my property and attempt to restore my livelihood, quickly took a toll. I realize the emotional wreckage during the aftermath is a huge part of the recovery and reclamation process.

So, seriously, *what's a Sistaah to do?*

- Develop an emotional rebound plan.
- Recharge your psychological battery by constantly re-assessing and planning ways to strengthen your physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Make a note of things that eased your experience and share these ideas with other Sistaahs.
- Add these things to your preparation kit for next hurricane season.
- Realize this is a part of life, and “this too shall pass!”

Fight Against Anxiety

Vera B. Selmore, PhD
SISTA AH Talk Coach



Life has a way of preparing us for future hurdles. As a single parent with 4-year-old twin boys, determination became my mantra. I accepted a National Institute of Mental Health graduate scholarship, and decided to turn a negative into a positive. I thrived and completed my PhD in 1985. About 16 years later, I faced another hurdle. It was a Sunday night, and I vividly dreamed that my left breast was bleeding into a basin. I awoke nervously, did breast self-examination,

and felt a lump. Early Monday morning I contacted my GYN, who confirmed I had a quickly growing cancer in my breast; it was removed three days later. My journey was really just beginning. Knowing that stress, anxiety, and depression supported cancer cells, I became an optimistic and determined survivor. My attitude was that losing was not an option. Radiation was set for twice a week. It was in a room with many women were waiting their turn. Entering the room, one was immediately overcome with sadness. It felt like a “wake.” The atmosphere was not good for anyone fighting to survive. I shared my approach with the other ladies. It was one of laughter, sharing, and of showing others how to fight against anxiety and depression by reducing the “I”. Without realizing, we had formed a supportive group of women who bonded during our radiation treatment, and we began to approach our treatment as if it was a natural event in our healing process. It was during these times I believe that my true path was revealed—to minimize the “I” and to give service to others. This greatly helped me in my own healing process and makes me forever grateful to the women I’ve met on my cancer journey.

An Unexpected Journey

Romane Petit Joseph, MS
SISTA AH Talk Coach



Before cancer, I never experienced a severe illness. For years, I embraced a lifestyle to stay in shape. I considered myself a healthy Haitian woman/mother enjoying a decent life. I anticipated that 2013 would be my best year. Yet, I knew something horrendous was coming when after I had a mammogram and ultrasound a week earlier, I received an urgent call in mid-December 2012 to have a core biopsy on my right breast at Memorial Hospital. Indeed, on February 1, 2013, the course of my life changed forever. I was on my way to work, when my primary care doctor confirmed by phone that I had breast cancer. In total disbelief, I was shaking and crying. Three weeks later, I learned that I also carry BRCA2 gene mutations, making me the first in my

family to be diagnosed with breast cancer. Because of my determination to beat cancer and with an outpouring of support, I had a bilateral mastectomy, total hysterectomy, bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy, and four breast reconstructions. Since my cancer was caught early (Stage 0), I avoided chemotherapy and radiation. When I meet brave women who endured even more arduous treatments than I, but are still standing up to breast cancer, I feel blessed. With almost 5 years of survivorship, I am immensely grateful and I want to be a positive influence on my sisters in this life-long fight.

THE NITTY GRITTY

Smartphone Apps

How do they stack up?

SISTA AH Talk Coaches partnered with researchers to get the 411 on the best health and fitness apps for cancer prevention. We scored apps high if they:

- Paid attention to cancer prevention guidelines
- Helped users modify lifestyle behaviors
- Were user “friendly”

Results from this study have been submitted to the Journal of Preventive Medicine for publication.

Here is the bottom line on our search for the best apps:



SISTA AH Talk coaches participating in **Mobile Cancer Prevention App (mCPA)**: (left to right): Annette Johnson, Monique Carver, Marie Charles, Romane Joseph, Mary Whitehead (Facilitator), Roberta Young, Gail Roberts, Vera Selmore, and Selina Smith (Founder)
Not pictured: Cathee Connor and Jill Bartee

Did you know?

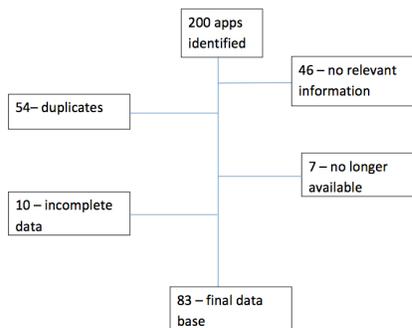
- 2/3 of people in the United States own smartphones
- More African Americans (47%) than Whites (42%) use smartphones
- 1/2 of smartphone owners have downloaded at least one health-related app
- Apps are available to help you manage:
 - Asthma
 - Diabetes
 - Pain
 - Anxiety



- Apps can help you reduce disease risk factors like:
 - Smoking
 - Obesity
 - Poor Diet
 - Inadequate Physical Activity

Apps & More Apps

We downloaded 200 iPhone and Android-compatible nutrition and physical activity apps to see if they included information related to cancer prevention. A few of them did *not* (46), so they were deleted. There were duplicates (54), so we got rid of them, too. At the time of our analysis seven (7) apps had *disappeared* (so we could not score them). Sometimes, coaches were unable to find all of the information we needed; in that case, 10 apps could not be evaluated. We scored a total of 83 apps.



Flow chart of apps included in the study

No Home Run

We gave each app 100 points for the 3 things most important to us: cancer prevention, lifestyle modification, and user-friendly features. Apps scored from 0 to 300 points. Here’s what we found:

- Apps that focused on both diet and physical activity scored the highest
- Most apps did not address cancer prevention guidelines
- Most apps did not tell users how to make changes (lifestyle modifications)
- Most apps were scored as easy to use
- Only six (6) apps scored 200 or better out of 300 possible points
- 50% of the apps scored less than 100 points
- The highest score (262) was for Everyday Health Calorie Counter

To learn more about SISTA AH Talk research results, Visit our Publications page at: www.sistaahtalk.net



Free iPhone or Android versions of **Calorie Counter** feature barcode scanning, offline entry, and dining-out guides.

The Low Down

1. When shopping for an app to support lifestyle change, there are lots of available apps
2. While on-line reviews of apps are available (as are reviews of restaurants, movies, etc.), only a few are adequate
3. Apps can range in cost from free to several dollars per month—shop wisely
4. Apps to promote cancer prevention through diet and physical activity are rare
5. Breast cancer survivors searching for an app to promote lifestyle changes to prevent recurrence should proceed with caution

WHAT'S UP?



1 Thess 5:18

Give thanks in all circumstances....

Expressing gratitude at times of devastation

(like Hurricane Irma) may not be easy.

If your house was damaged (or if it was not); give thanks. If you lost power (or you had power); give thanks. If you faced the challenges of a breast cancer diagnosis and endured treatment; give thanks.

Join us to **Give Thanks!**



SISTA AH Talk!

Women of Color Breast Cancer Support Group

Give Thanks

Saturday, November 18th, 3:00pm-6:00pm

Florida Memorial University

J. C. Sams Multipurpose Room

15800 NW 42nd Ave, Miami Gardens 30054

To register, visit our website: www.sistaahtalk.net

Free Fresh Fixins

Eating fresh fruits and vegetables is the hallmark of cancer prevention. This is especially important for breast cancer survivors who want to prevent recurrence.

After we share a holiday meal during **Give Thanks on November 18th**, breast cancer survivors can receive free fresh fixins bags with ingredients for their Thanksgiving side dishes.



Junior Detectives

Breast cancer is the most visible and most feared form of cancer. Awareness of this dreaded disease presents a unique opportunity—a chance to replace *fear* with *empowerment*. Experts agree that it maybe worthwhile for young women to start breast self-exams as early as their 20s. SISTA AH Talk! is committed to helping older girls and young women of color establish breast-healthy behaviors. Help them learn how!



Lil' SISTA AH Talk!

Thursday, January 25, 2018, 4:00pm-6:00pm

Florida Memorial University

15800 NW 42nd Ave, Miami Gardens 30054

For more information, visit: www.sistaahtalk.net

Registration is required to receive a bag
American and Caribbean options will be available
To register, breast cancer survivors should visit the Home page on our website: www.sistaahtalk.net

High Tech Talk

Sometimes, like during the holidays, you don't have time to attend a face-to-face SISTA AH Talk! Yet, you want that warm feeling that you get when we are together.

So, we developed an online gathering for breast cancer survivors and their supporters—a place to get that special feeling—like girlfriends chatting over a cup of tea at the kitchen table. Join us!



TABLE TALK

Saturday, December 16, 2017, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

You can join us from your computer, tablet or smartphone:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/558430501>

You can also dial in using your phone:

1 (646) 749-3131

Access Code: 558-430-501

First GoToMeeting? Try a test session before Dec. 16th:

<http://link.gotomeeting.com/email-welcome>

7 Ways to Beat

the Blues

1. Think pink—your thoughts matter so focus on healing
2. Pray—remember, prayer changes things
3. Don't be alone—try to be with other people
4. Do something to make you happy—an activity that you enjoy
5. Eat a healthy meal—high sugar, high fat foods can make you feel sluggish
6. Take a walk—exercise helps improve your mood
7. Talk with someone about how you feel—like another breast cancer survivor



Merry Christmas



SISTA AH Talk!

Women of Color Breast Cancer Support Group

Wishing you a
Merry Christmas,
Happy Kwanza, &
Healthy New Year