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# TLF Angel Advocate IG Live Chat Summary: Finding Your Pretty After Breast Cancer

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## INTRODUCTION

We are excited to share this much-needed conversation on Instagram about demystifying the breast cancer survivorship journey. One of the biggest myths about survivorship is that life can return to normal after cancer, and challenges can be quickly dealt with. Keisha and Maricia amplified this conversation on their social media connections with the Tigerlily Foundation to detail key issues experienced in survivorship that are rarely discussed.

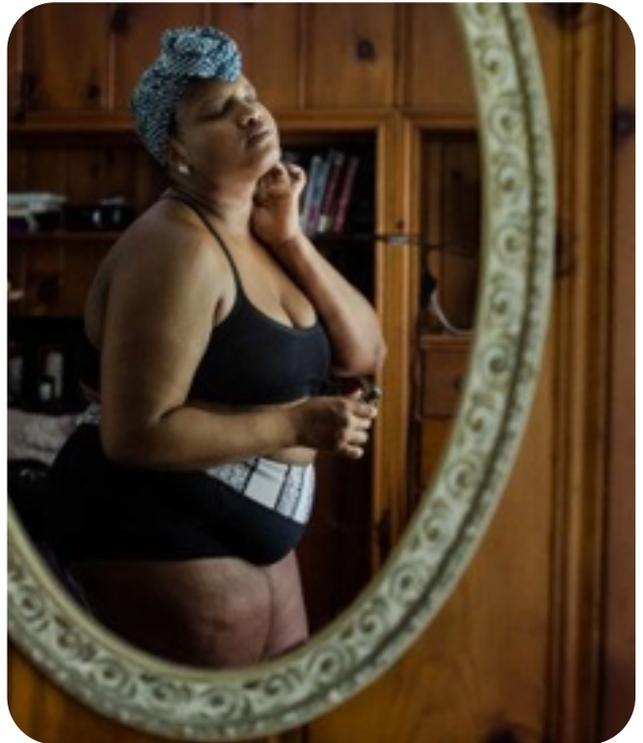
## SEXUALITY & BODY IMAGE AFTER BREAST CANCER

Breast cancer alters your body—internally and externally. Keisha and Maricia spoke about navigating these challenges daily. But, first, they had to get used to the changes happening to their bodies from different surgeries and cancer treatments.

When managing a breast cancer diagnosis, both ANGELS spoke of the need to communicate with their partners about balancing the various changes while continuing an intimate relationship. Having an open and **honest conversation** about intercourse with your partner will help build confidence for all involved to support the needs of each other. One piece of advice mentioned in the Instagram (IG) Live was to bring up sexual health concerns with your doctor. They may have ideas and suggestions that can help restore romantic relations.

To help overcome negative thoughts and emotions about appearance, the ANGELS spoke about getting creative and experimenting with new looks. For example, Maricia talked about getting her eyebrows micro-bladed to help restore their appearance and **boost her confidence**. Keisha chimed in, sharing how she could experiment with different headwraps while navigating hair loss.

One of the most poignant takeaways from this portion of the discussion was reaching a point in your journey to accept your appearance and not feel like you have to hide who you are. Of course, no one should feel pressured to keep up their appearance to portray a particular look; however, there are several ways individuals diagnosed with breast cancer can create a new beauty routine that represents their true selves and spark **self-confidence**.



## FINDING ONE'S TRIBE & MENTAL HEALTH

The breast cancer journey can bring on **anxiety, depression, shame**, and many other feelings. Keisha and Maricia spoke about the need to connect with other breast cancer patients, survivors, and thrivers who knew this journey from personal experience. There is comradery and partnership among individuals that cannot be replaced or likened to other relationships. Keisha and Maricia emphasized that finding your tribe and community of support can help.



Finding organizations like the Tigerlily Foundation creates a way for individuals to connect and uplift one another. There is something extraordinary about finding support during the highs and lows of the breast cancer experience. It requires being adaptable and, at times, vulnerable with friends and family. Creating a strong support system can help make the journey a bit easier to navigate.

One of the ways individuals can do this is by finding a **therapist** they can trust to help guide them through the process. Keisha highlighted that starting therapy as soon as you get the diagnosis can be an excellent opportunity to establish short and long-term plans throughout the cancer journey.

Keisha gave an excellent example of how communicating with her therapist gave her a new outlook and mindset. During cancer treatment, Keisha decided it would be best to stop working and focus on healing her mind and body. Before returning to work, Keisha's therapist gave her an exercise to try. While at home, Keisha's therapist tasked her with getting dressed in her work clothes and wearing different wigs. As simple as this sounds, this helped Keisha get comfortable in her new body before going to work. Keisha shared that getting used to this **new routine** was a challenge, but it improves each week.

## SUMMARY

Conversations like these are crucial to understanding the quality of life for cancer survivors and thrivers. Giving yourself time to process and find what works for you in your new routine is essential. Many things will have to be learned, but new opportunities and doors are waiting on the other side of a breast cancer diagnosis. There is also a need to find support that will benefit you and your journey. Not everyone will be able to relate to your experience, so it's crucial to find those who can encourage and inspire you to reflect and take action.

## TLF RESOURCES

Check out the following resources to explore the topics covered at the event:

[TLF Toolkit Quality of Life](#)

[TLF Toolkit The New Normal](#)

[TLF Toolkit Mental Health](#)

[TLF Comfort Affirmation Reconnection and Empowerment \(CARE\) Coaching](#)

Are you interested in learning more about the Tigerlily Foundation? Sign up for the [newsletter](#) to stay connected to TLF!