

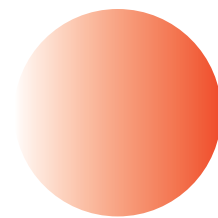


IMERMAN  
ANGELS



# Mentor Angel Guidebook

What it means to be a Mentor Angel  
for those whose lives have been  
impacted by a cancer diagnosis.



# Executive Summary

## In this guide you will...

- Understand who is a Mentor Angel - how do they support others
- Build skills to be a trusted and supportive Mentor Angel
- Engage with mentorship as a form of leadership
- Learn the difference between an advice-seeking relationship and a support -seeking relationship
- Become trauma informed
- Re-center your commitment to be a Mentor Angel

## How to use this guide:

You can read the guidebook cover to cover - or read sections that are most relevant to you in the moment. The guidebook is broken up into three sections:

### 1. Becoming a Mentor Angel

In this section, you will learn the nuts and bolts of your role as a Mentor Angel including the history of the program, terminology, selection process, expectations, and a sample email for your first interaction.

### 2. Mentor Toolkit

Mentorship is a broad term used in many spaces to define a supportive relationship. At Imerman Angels, we use a variety of frameworks to inform our definition of and ways to support mentorship. In this section you will learn about transformational leadership theory, trauma-informed care, cultural humility, ring theory and compassion fatigue. In addition, we have provided some tools to assist in managing your own self-care.

### 3. Resources and FAQ

Have a quick question or seeking some additional resources for your Support Seeker or yourself? Check out the back of this guide. Here, you will find contact info, commonly asked questions, and organizations/books/podcasts we recommend for additional guidance.

Imerman Angels Vision:

**Imerman Angels envisions a world where cancer is not a solitary experience.**

Imerman Angels Mission:

**Imerman Angels' mission is to provide comfort and understanding for all cancer fighters, survivors, previvors and caregivers through a personalized, one-on-one connection with someone who has been there.**

### **Welcome**

Thank you for taking initiative and showing interest in becoming a Mentor Angel. You have demonstrated you are committed to guiding and supporting cancer fighters, survivors, previvors and caregivers.

We are so appreciative of your time and commitment. This manual will help you learn more about Imerman Angels and what it means to be a Mentor Angel for those whose lives have been impacted by a cancer diagnosis. In this manual, you will learn more about peer-to-peer mentoring, the Imerman Angels matching process, and resources and guidelines to help facilitate a meaningful mentorship match.

### **DEI Vision**

Creating an intentional and equity-minded peer-led cancer support for all.

### **Dei Mission Statement**

Imerman Angels is committed to building inclusive, safe spaces and creating a sense of belonging for those seeking cancer support. We are dedicated to providing a welcoming and impactful peer-to-peer community for all touched by cancer. As allies, we will leverage our resources for those marginalized by the healthcare system and provide a comprehensive psychosocial support experience.

### **Zero-Tolerance Policy**

Imerman Angels has the right to refuse matching services to people who exhibit and/or communicate racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, and other discriminatory behavior. While we intend to serve all who need cancer support, those that don't reflect our values of inclusivity and empathy will not be a good fit in our community.

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# The History of Imerman Angels



**Jonny Imerman, Co-Founder**

Imerman Angels was created on the belief that no one should have to face cancer alone and without the necessary support. At 26 years old, Jonny Imerman was diagnosed with testicular cancer and began his fight against the disease. Throughout his experience, Jonny was lucky enough to have loving support from his family and friends but had never met anyone his age who was a cancer survivor. He wanted to talk to someone just like him, someone who truly understood, and was intimately familiar with his experience. In short, he was looking for someone who had already faced the same type of cancer. This was the beginning of Jonny's vision and in 2006, it became a reality when he founded Imerman Angels.

Through our unique matching process, Imerman Angels partners anyone, any gender, anywhere and any cancer type seeking support with someone just like them – a “Mentor Angel.” A Mentor Angel is a cancer survivor or caregiver who most importantly has faced the same type of cancer.

Since 2006, Imerman Angels has made more than 44,000 matches in more than 113 countries and facilitated endless honest conversations about cancer.

# What We Do

Imerman Angels serves anyone affected by any type of cancer, any stage, living anywhere in the world. Through our unique matching process, we pair individuals seeking cancer support with a “Mentor Angel.” While we recognize that each cancer experience and life situation is unique, a Mentor Angel is a cancer survivor, previvor, or caregiver who is as similar as possible in a variety of criteria including age, gender, and most importantly, cancer experience.

**The service is absolutely free.**

The magic of what Imerman Angels does shines when we are able to make specific matches tailored to individual needs. We have found that “cancer support” looks different for every individual fighter, survivor, previvor and caregiver who comes to us for help. For one person, it might be important that their Mentor Angel is a survivor of their exact cancer type. Another person may want to talk to a fellow single mom about how she broke the news to her children. Another person may want to talk specifically about how a cancer diagnosis impacted their career, and how to tell their boss about the diagnosis. We do everything in our power to meet the specific criteria of each individual that comes to us in their hour of need.

From your own experience, you are aware that a cancer diagnosis often comes with an overload of information from oncologists and hospital staff. You are expected to not only understand your diagnosis – often complicated by medical jargon, subtypes, and stages – but you are also given so much information about treatment options, financial aid, symptom management,

future appointment scheduling, and more. It is an overwhelming and difficult situation for which a majority of people are not prepared to handle.

Not only that, people are scared. Scared of the disease itself, of the impending symptoms, and of the aftermath of their treatment. Who can they turn to at this moment to ask the most burning, personal questions on their mind? What is it like to date after being diagnosed with cancer? What does it feel like when they insert the chemotherapy needle? How visible will my surgical scars be? How do I support my husband, whose symptoms leave him unable to eat? What do I do now? Imerman Angels fill the understanding gap in comprehensive cancer care by providing one-on-one cancer support services; giving cancer fighters, previvors, survivors, and caregivers a resource who can answer these questions with the insight of personal experience. While Mentor Angels provide crucial psychosocial support, they are trained not to provide medical advice.

As a result of Imerman Angels’ matching program, cancer fighters, survivors, previvors and caregivers feel less alone, more hopeful, and more equipped to face their cancer experience head-on. For cancer survivors, participating as an Imerman Angels Mentor Angel helps in post-traumatic growth and building resiliency. We hear over and over again that serving as a Mentor was key to their healing after experiencing cancer.

# Terminology and Definitions

## **Mentor Angel**

Survivor, fighter, previvor or caregiver who is ready to provide emotional support.

## **Support Seeker**

Fighter/caregiver/previvor looking for emotional support as a Mentee.

## **Previvor**

Individuals who have a predisposition to cancer; however, they have not yet had cancer. This predisposition may be due to a genetic mutation, a family history of cancer, or another factor that increases their risk.

## **Caregiver**

A caregiver is a paid or unpaid member of a person's social network who helps them with activities of daily living.

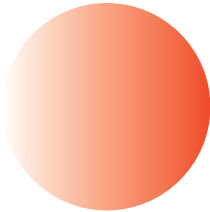
## **Match**

Imerman Angels makes a match between a Mentor Angel and a person requesting a Mentor Angel, sometimes called a Support Seeker or Mentee. We match a person looking for support to someone who is able to give support.

## **Follow-up Survey**

In order to ensure Imerman Angels is providing a meaningful match, we send a follow-up survey to the Mentor and Mentee one month after the match has been made. We send an additional survey six months after the match has been made to continue gauging the effectiveness of the match and to better understand the impact of Imerman Angels' programs on the Mentor and Mentee.





# What is a Mentor Angel?



## Peer Mentorship

Peer mentoring pairs people with similar lived experiences to provide support, guidance and connection. At Imerman Angels, our Mentor Angels are paired with Support Seekers who are currently living with or supporting someone with a similar cancer diagnosis and life experience to the Mentor Angel. Peer-to-peer cancer mentoring offers individualized, one-on-one support with proven results. Patients with peer mentors are more likely to maintain their overall well-being, sustain hope and motivation, and increase self-efficacy through their relationships with their mentors.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brauer, Clark, Solberg Nes, Miller et al., Journal of Pain and Symptom Management, Volume 51, Issue 5, e5 - e7; Rini, C., Lawsin, C., Austin, J., DuHamel, K., Markarian, Y., Burkhalter, J., Labay, L., & Redd, W. H. (2007). *Peer mentoring and survivors' stories for cancer patients: positive effects and some cautionary notes*. Journal of Clinical Oncology: Official Journal of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, 25(1), 163–166





Allison

"Being part of Imerman Angels gave me hope through this process when the doctors didn't have a lot of hope for me. There is always hope in being a stage 4 colon cancer survivor"

"My battle with cancer was long and very difficult. Along the way I met so many who were frightened and alone. I was blessed to survive... and now I want very much to provide support to others who are just beginning this journey."



JonDarr



Kristi

"I always tell people that having breast cancer is like joining a club of the most amazing women. It's a club that no one wants to be a part of and I wish it didn't have to exist, but I'm so grateful that it does. Now I'm a mentor angel with Imerman Angels and I'm more than willing to support other women in any way I can."

# The Mentor Angel Process

**Recruit → Register → Screen → Train → Match → Survey**

## **1. Registration and Assessment**

### **(Online, via phone, or paper)**

A Mentor Angel or Support Seeker provides a profile with information about their personal experience with cancer. This profile includes demographic information, details of cancer diagnosis, potential genetic mutations, treatment history and more. We collect this information to help create the best and most personalized matches for our community. This intake process can take time depending on the details shared.

## **2. Training**

After you've completed the assessment with a member of the Imerman Angels' team, you are sent this Mentor Angel guidebook and a training video via email (if you would like a paper copy of the guidebook, please reach out to our staff). We ask you to read through the guidebook, review the training video, and contact a member of the team with any questions. Know your most valuable training has come from your lived experience with cancer; this experience will aid you when mentoring a Support Seeker.

## **3. Matching**

Once applicants become Mentor Angels, they remain in the matching network and will be contacted when they are determined to be an appropriate match for a person looking for support. Each time a Support Seeker requests a Mentor Angel, a Cancer Support Specialist at Imerman Angels will work to create a personalized match that takes into account the specific needs of those requesting support.

Our first priority is meeting our Support Seekers' specific requests in their time of need. Given the specificity of these requests, we never know when each Mentor Angel will be matched. It could be a week, a month, a year, or longer until you are matched. Please know your commitment to serve – whenever you are called upon – is a gift to so many. You will remain in our network and be eligible for matches until you tell us otherwise.

## **4. Surveys**

To ensure Imerman Angels is providing a meaningful match, we send a follow-up survey to the Mentor and Mentee one month after the match is made. We send an additional survey six months after the match has been made to continue to understand the impact of an Imerman Angels' peer-to-peer connection. These surveys are crucial in helping our staff and community assess the success of psychosocial cancer support and we are deeply grateful for your participation in these surveys.

Remember, if something in your life changes, such as your address, relationship status, contact information, cancer information, etc. let us know. This updated information helps us create better and more customized matches.

# Roles and Responsibilities

- The purpose of the matches made by Imerman Angels is to provide peer-to-peer cancer support from someone who has been there.
- If you are contacted by an Imerman Angels staff member about a potential match, please return the call within 48 business hours. As you are aware, there is often an urgency for Support Seekers requesting one-on-one support and your prompt response helps alleviate some of that anxiety.
- Under no circumstance should any Mentor Angel solicit or offer medical, professional, financial, or other similar advice. Mentees will often have questions about a Mentor Angel's medical and treatment history. Mentor Angels may speak about their experiences without offering advice.
- Mentor Angels should not recommend nor endorse any specific medical or non-medical test, physician, product, or procedure. They should not use this relationship to further the sales of any product that financially benefits them, their friends, family, or business partners.
- The frequency and amount of communication are up to you and your Support Seeker. The goal is for you to be committed to working with your Support Seeker for as long as they need. Generally, it is best to adjust your level of support to the needs of your Support Seeker. As time goes on, it is important to follow up, check-in, and let the Support Seeker know when you're available. Be sure to give us a call and ask for assistance if your Mentee is asking for more than you feel you can reasonably provide. Remember, every Support Seeker/Mentor relationship is different and may need different levels of commitment.
- Mentor Angels should make the first contact within 48 hours of being connected with their Support Seeker.

## Sample Introductory Email from Mentor Angel to Support Seeker

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

It's nice to meet you and welcome to Imerman Angels. I can't say enough about the support that is provided through our program. I'm looking forward to getting to know you and am only sorry that we are meeting under these circumstances. I will give you a call later this evening or you are welcome to call me any time. My number is xxx-xxx-xxxx and the best time to reach me is... Talk soon,

\_\_\_\_\_

# Mentor Toolkit



## **Transformational Leadership Theory**

Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT) began in the business sector in the late 1970s. The frameworks have been adapted recently to Mentor/Support Seeker relationships with positive outcomes. TLT utilizes encouragement, inspiration, and personal investment to support teams. Using these concepts can increase motivation, confidence, and hope with your Support Seeker.

### **1. Idealized Influence**

Idealized influence is having the ability to acknowledge the influence you have on your Support Seeker, and using that influence to model resilience, connection, and positive coping strategies. Mentor Angels can enhance their idealized influence by being present with their Support Seeker, actively listening, and praising progress or growth, no matter how small.

### **2. Inspirational Motivation**

Mentors can create inspirational motivation with their Support Seekers by instilling hope and aiding their Mentees in finding purpose. It is key to recognize that some Mentees may not be ready or may not resonate with terms like “hope” and “purpose.” Mentors can still embody these concepts within the relationship.

### **3. Individualized Consideration**

It is key to understand the struggles and strengths of your Support Seeker. Mentors can help Support Seekers to not have binary/rigid thinking but rather innovate and compromise when faced with obstacles. Empowering Support Seekers to advocate for their own care is beneficial in building self-efficacy and confidence. It is important to not criticize or lead this process, but instead create an environment of support and trust that allows the Support Seeker to brainstorm and process with their Mentor.

### **4. Intellectual Communication**

The role of a Mentor is to create a space where a Support Seeker feels they can be candid and process safely. This happens by building trust, providing unconditional support, and allowing the Support Seeker to guide the conversation and prioritize their needs. In this environment, Support Seekers feel nurtured and safe, which allows the kind of dialogue they may not be able to have with someone in their support system.

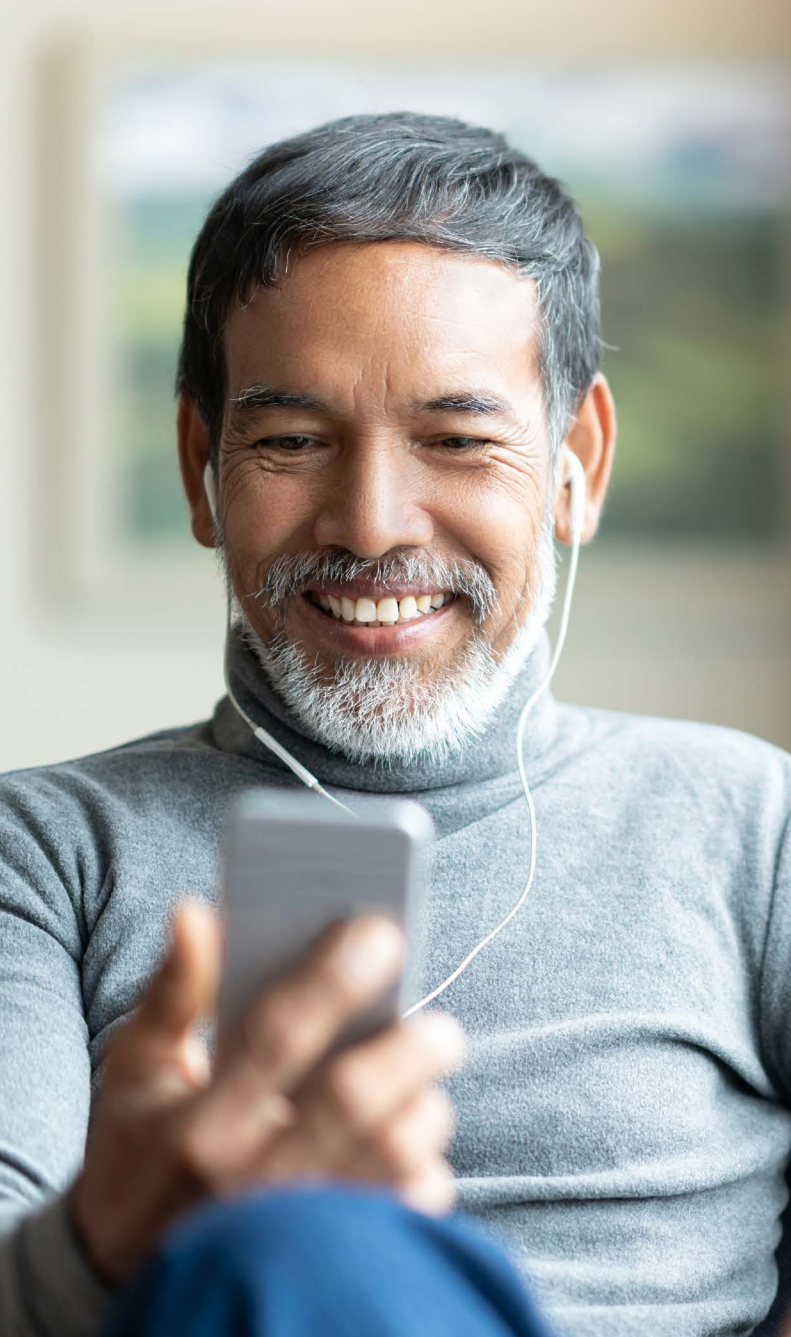
## Tips

# Creating a Supportive Mentor/support Seeker Relationship

- Schedule a follow-up conversation with your Support Seeker after your first interaction.
- Use a warm, friendly and welcoming tone.
- Be supportive, relaxed, helpful, patient and interested.
- Engage in a conversation about expectations and when you are most available.
- Allow your Support Seeker to guide how often you meet. Make yourself available to what they need.
- Your Support Seeker should set how they would like to interact: in person, text, Zoom/virtual, or phone.
- Be honest and sensitive to your Support Seeker's needs.
- Be present. Try to avoid distractions or multitasking while talking to your Support Seeker.
- Remember to express to the Support Seeker that you can not dispense medical advice.
- Keep your conversations confidential.
- Ask your Support Seeker what tests or treatments they have coming up. Remember important aspects of their lives (where they work, their partner's name, etc).
- Empower your Support Seeker to have a say in their treatment and that it's normal to ask for a second opinion.
- Be aware that mentioning recurrences or secondary cancers could overwhelm your Support Seeker unless you are being matched based on the recurrence or secondary cancer.
- Ask open-ended questions such as:
  - What concerns do you have about your diagnosis and treatment?
  - What does your treatment schedule look like?
  - When would you like to communicate again?
  - Would you like me to reach out to you or would you like to reach out to me

\*If you have been diagnosed with an additional cancer, experienced a recurrence or update in treatments please contact Imerman Angels to explore your own support option.





- Please set clear boundaries and expectations with your Support Seeker about your communication method and schedule. For example, they can expect to hear from you within 24 hours of their communication.
- Listen without passing judgment.
- Remember it is ok to respond to questions by saying, “I don’t know” or “That is a question for your medical team.”
- Remember your Support Seeker is not expecting you to solve their problems. They are looking for someone to listen without judgment.
- Keep an open mind. A person’s background may affect how they react to and cope with an illness. We will always do our best to match similar backgrounds, but also remain aware that your experience may differ from your Support Seeker.
- You may send a note and/or get-well card in the mail, but please understand we cannot provide your Support Seeker’s mailing address to you. Please ask for their address directly.
- If you need to end the relationship for any reason, please call us and we will make sure this is communicated appropriately.
- Supporting another person, although rewarding, can sometimes bring up past grief and trauma, be emotionally taxing, and unpredictable. Throughout your Mentor Angel/Support Seeker relationship it is important to manage your own self-care, boundaries, and overall wellness. You can do this by journaling, reflecting with your support system or a mental health professional, maintaining positive routines, and connecting with other Mentor Angels via the Facebook Group or the Imerman Angels’ program team.
- Make a minimum of three attempts to reach out to your Support Seeker – at least one by email, and one by phone call if that information is provided. If you do not hear back from your Support Seeker after three attempts contact Imerman Angels to verify that the Support Seeker’s contact information is correct.



# Things to Avoid

## The “Advice-giving” Relationship

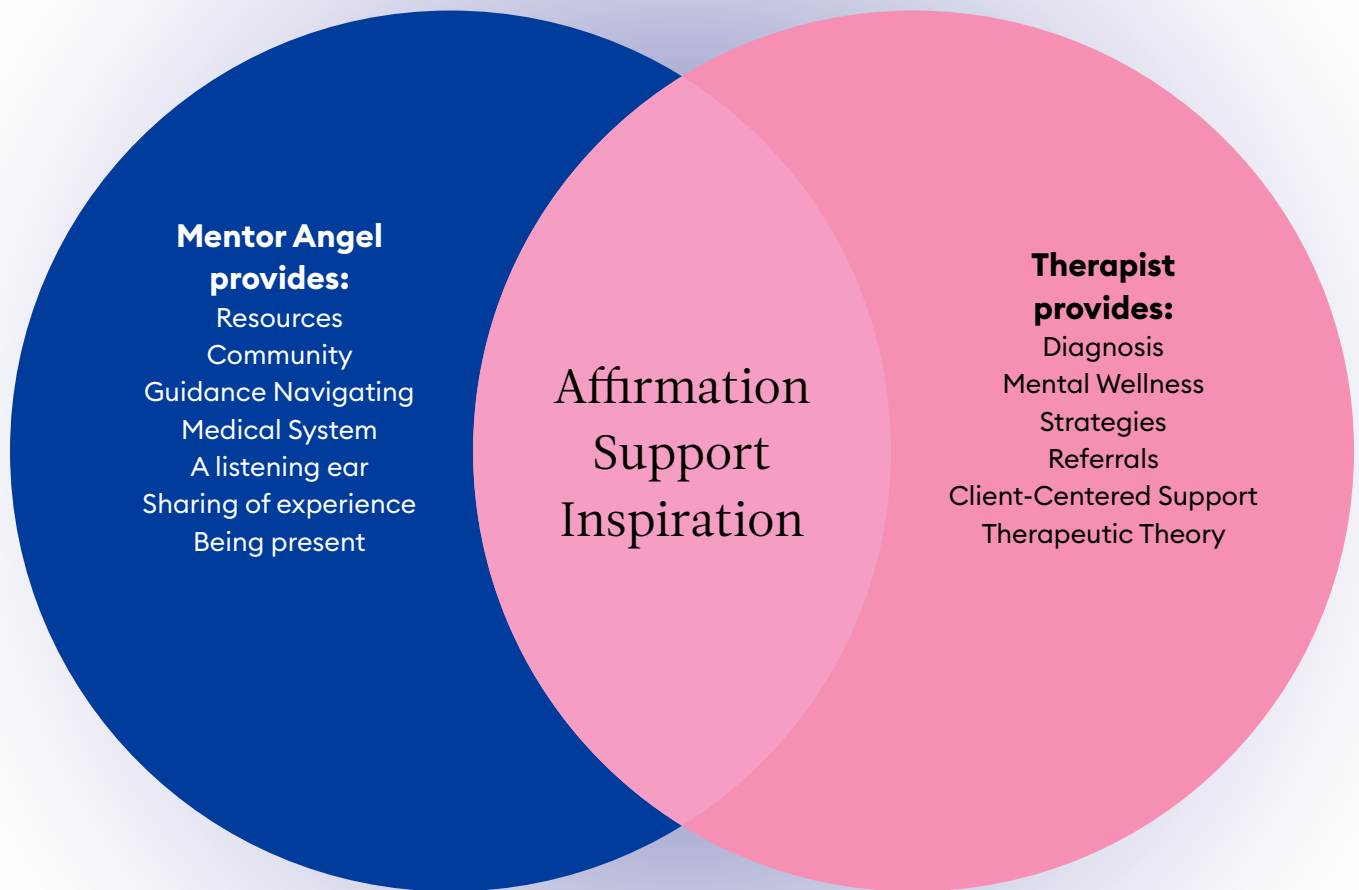
- Be mindful of sharing too much of your story unless you are asked. Remember, this is about the person seeking support.
- Give medical, clinical advice or diagnose a medical problem.
- Monopolize the conversation by being long-winded or interrupting the Support Seeker.
- Provide money or financial assistance to your Support Seeker.
- Attempt to sell products or services to your Support Seeker.
- Provide your personal opinion on their medical status or outcome.
- Tell your Support Seeker what they “should” do or what you would do if you were them.
- Criticize doctors, physicians, medical institutions or other healthcare professionals.
- Share more information than the Support Seeker wants.
- Try to talk to your Support Seeker into or out of anything.
- Continue a conversation if your Support Seeker is in any way abusive or makes you feel uncomfortable. If this happens, contact us as soon as possible.
- Do not “disappear” on your Support Seeker. Please remember a sudden end to your communication can create additional isolation and concern for your Support Seeker.

To further explain the difference between an “advice-giving” relationship and a “supportive/helping” relationship - please see the chart below. We take a concept important in the Support Seeker/Mentor relationship and highlight how this concept is reflected within each style of relationship.

Concept	Advice-Giving	Supportive/Helping
Interaction	Talking to	Talking with
Role	Authority	Facilitator
Expertise	Reliable knowledge	Interpersonal communication
Time	Brief, agenda based	Extended, Support Seeker led
Function	Provides information	Problem Solving
Relationship	Limited and courteous	In depth and Personal
Sharing	Advice does not need the perspective of others	Requires active listening
Limits	Must have all the answers	Knows when to refer and contact Imerman Angels

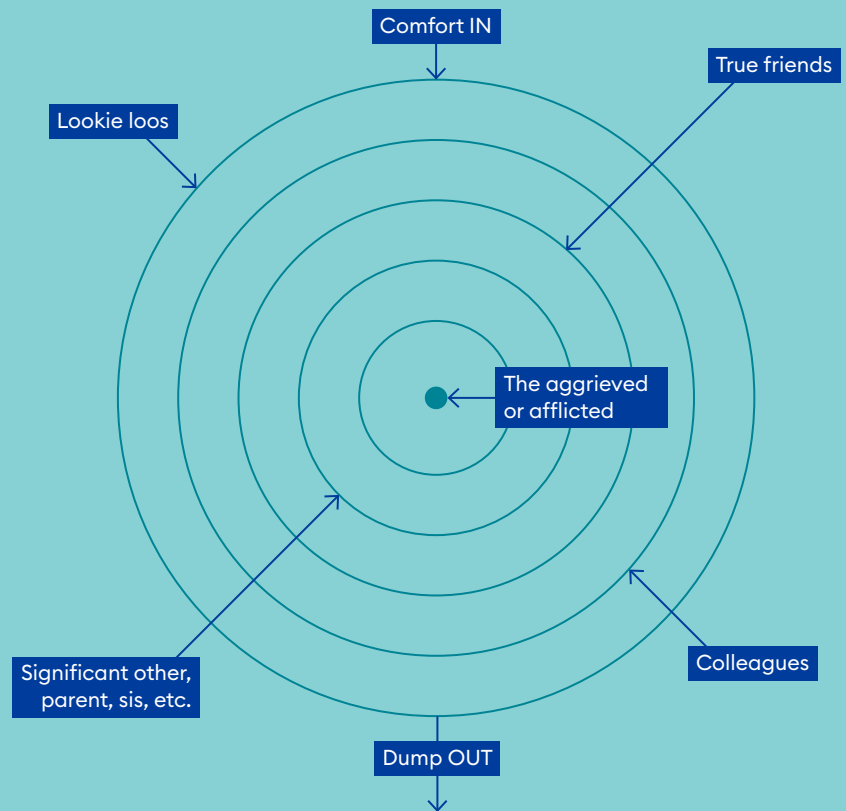
#### **Contact The Imerman Angels Office If:**

- There is a problem of any kind - we are always happy to help.
- You have any questions about anything regarding your match.
- Your match is abusive or discriminatory in any way.
- Your match asks you for any kind of financial assistance.
- You feel as though the match is not working out.
- You feel as though you need help supporting your match.
- You are feeling overwhelmed or feel you need support.
- You believe your match is at risk of harming themselves or someone else.
- Your match needs the support of a mental-health professional.
- Your match or the person they are caring for passes away.



# Ring Theory<sup>2</sup>

As you build a relationship with your Support Seeker, knowing how much to share with them regarding your own personal life may feel confusing. Created by psychologists Susan Silk and Barry Goldman, the ring theory is a concept that can assist you and your Support Seeker to explore what to disclose when you are in the midst of a crisis.



## When there is a crisis

1. Get a piece of paper - and write the person who is in the midst of the crisis in the middle and draw a circle around them.
2. Draw a larger circle around the first circle and write down all the people who are closest to the crisis.
3. Draw as many circles as needed - including family, friends, co-workers, etc.

Here are the simple rules. Whoever is in the center of the circle can say whatever they want to anyone in the outer circles - they can grieve, they can negotiate, they can ask for help. Whenever you are speaking to someone who is in a circle smaller than your own, your goal is to help (suggestions below). If you are speaking to a person in a circle larger than yours, you can “dump” or vent to them. The idea is this: Comfort in, dump out.

## Ways to help someone in a smaller circle

1. Listen! People experiencing trauma and grief do not need advice, they need support.
2. Don't say “Let me know what you need,” but rather offer ways to support. Often people in the middle of grief do not have the bandwidth to ask for what they need.
3. Offer to drop off food, go for a walk, or send a gift.
4. Always give an option to not respond to a message or a request; their comfort is priority.
5. In short, comfort IN and venting/dump OUT.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/promoting-hope-preventing-suicide/201705/ring-theory-helps-us-bring-comfort-in>

# Cultural Humility

Although you and the Support Seeker may share many of the same identities, undoubtedly you will each have different lived experiences. To create an optimal connection, using cultural humility as a framework can help you navigate conversations about experiences you are unfamiliar with. The National Institute of Health defines cultural humility as “a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique whereby the individual not only learns about another’s culture, but one starts with an examination of their own beliefs and cultural identities.”



## **1. Examine your own personal biases**

Unlike cultural competency, cultural humility encourages personal reflection in addition to learning and understanding of diverse cultures. Cultural humility begins with a personal awareness of biases, oppression and privilege.

## **2. Create an environment where you can learn together**

As a Mentor, it is important to do your own learning with regards to cultures and lived experiences that are different from your Support Seeker. Competency cannot be reached with training or by reading a book. In addition, within your mentor relationship, you will naturally learn with and from each other. It is a continuous process with no endpoint.

## **3. Be curious about your Support Seeker’s experiences**

Support Seekers know their own lived experiences better than anyone else. A key role of the Mentor is to listen to their Support Seeker’s experience. When a Support Seeker has different lived experiences than the Mentor, creating a space for candid, curious and supportive conversations is key.

## **4. View the Mentor Angel/Support Seeker relationship as mutually beneficial**

The Support Seeker receives many benefits, but the Mentor does as well. Mutually beneficial relationships help diminish power dynamics that can sometimes be damaging to the depth of a relationship.

# Being Trauma Informed

“The traumatized soul finds no rest in conditions of peace. It’s forever questing for violence, for action, for the same combination of factors which gave rise to it in the first place.”

– Matthew S. Williams

## Trauma<sup>3</sup>

[trou-muh] *noun*

Any disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on a person’s attitudes, behavior, and other aspects of functioning. Traumatic events include those caused by human behavior as well as by nature (e.g., earthquakes) and often challenge an individual’s view of the world as a just, safe, and predictable place.

Your Support Seeker may be suffering from trauma or be trauma exposed. This is very common, but often misunderstood. Trauma can look like: irritability, insomnia, hypervigilance, having multiple triggers (places, words, objects that bring up painful memories), isolation, difficulty concentrating, etc.<sup>4</sup> When working with trauma-exposed Support Seekers keep in mind the “Universal Precautions” approach to trauma:

### The 5 S’s<sup>5</sup>

**Supportive Relationships:** People who have been exposed to trauma crave support, which can be best exhibited through stability. Allowing your Support Seeker to know your relationship is stable, and that you will not be easily pushed away, is helpful.

**Safety:** Trauma-exposed people crave safety. You can create safety by having predictable times to meet and allowing them to create the parameters (where you meet, where you sit, the freedom to leave at any time). Safety can also be manifested with structure. It is important to set clear boundaries and expectations with your Support Seeker. For example: “I prefer that you text me or I do not answer my texts after 10 pm.”

**Self Soothing:** Recognize that “disruptive” behavior (doodling, getting up, tapping a pencil, constant bathroom breaks) could be self-soothing techniques. Working with a trauma-exposed population can be

unpredictable and Mentors can model positive coping mechanisms. Mentors should also praise Support Seekers when they display positive coping strategies (ie. taking time for walks, meditation, seeking therapy).

**Strengths:** While someone is grieving, highlight to them the things they are doing well and the steps they are taking in their healing. Different from positivity, focusing on strengths acknowledges the difficulty of the circumstance while helping Mentees acknowledge the progress they have made.

**Self-Care:** Assist your Support Seeker with focusing on their own wellness and self care. Trauma is consuming, and self care is often the first thing that falls to the wayside. Talking with your Support Seeker about their sleeping habits, nutrition, spiritual practices, relaxation, and supportive relationships can help them prioritize self care.

3 <https://dictionary.apa.org/trauma>

4 <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/coping-with-emotional-and-psychological-trauma.htm>

5 <https://sites.rutgers.edu/shp-shpri/trauma-informed-care-universal-precautions/>



## Compassion Fatigue

In addition to the Support Seeker being trauma exposed, you have also had traumatic experiences. Working with Support Seekers may cause old feelings and memories to resurface. As with the Support Seeker, if you find that this is the case you should focus on your own self care and connecting with your support system or a mental health professional. If you feel your relationship with your Support Seeker is taking a toll on your mental health, please reach out to the Imerman Angels team.

As a Mentor Angel, it is important to notice if you are beginning to experience Compassion Fatigue (also known as Vicarious Trauma). Compassion Fatigue is different from burnout. Burnout is often the accumulation of stress typically after a busy season of life. This is typically remedied by an extended break and relaxation. Compassion Fatigue is mental and spiritual. People may experience apathy, mood swings, trouble focusing, anxiety, or even depression. Compassion Fatigue is best treated by focusing on self-care/wellness, rekindling your “why” and drive for your service, and finding support through the community or mental health professional. If you believe you are experiencing Compassion Fatigue impacting your role as a Mentor, contact the Imerman Angels team.

### Ideas for Mentor Angel Self Care

**Journal:** Journaling is a powerful tool to calm an anxious mind, reflect, and set intentions for the future. On Google or Pinterest, you can search “journal prompts for \_\_\_\_\_” and multiple writing prompts will be available.

**Practice Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is the act of being present in the moment. You can practice mindfulness by doing a walking meditation, listening to a guided meditation on YouTube or an App (Headspace, Calm, Liberate, Chill), or by focusing all your energy on one activity (washing the dishes, coloring, even thrifting can be mindful!).

**Calm your Vagus Nerve:**<sup>7</sup> The Vagus Nerve is a nerve that runs throughout your body that becomes activated when we are overwhelmed, anxious, and stressed. You can calm the Vagus Nerve instantly by pressing a cold compress on your chest, taking a cold shower or going out for a brisk walk around your neighborhood.

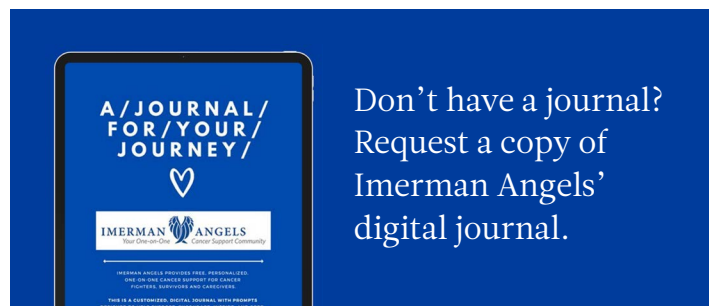
## Compassion Fatigue<sup>6</sup>

[kuhm-pash-uhn fuh-teeg] *noun*

Stress-related symptoms experienced by caregivers and other helping professionals in reaction to working with traumatized people over an extended period of time.

**Create Routines:** Having a morning and nighttime routine can signal to your brain that you are ready to start or end your day. Consistent routines can help ease stress and maintain your wellness. Search YouTube for “Morning or Night Routines” for ideas.

**Connect:** Connect with other Mentor Angels in the Facebook Group: Imerman Angels Mentor Angel Community or the Imerman Angels team to share and learn new strategies.



<sup>6</sup> <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/signs-compassion-fatigue>

<sup>7</sup> [https://sass.uottawa.ca/sites/sass.uottawa.ca/files/how\\_to\\_stimulate\\_your\\_vagus\\_nerve\\_for\\_better\\_mental\\_health\\_1.pdf](https://sass.uottawa.ca/sites/sass.uottawa.ca/files/how_to_stimulate_your_vagus_nerve_for_better_mental_health_1.pdf)

# Mentor Motivation



## Your Cancer Story

Many current Mentors shared that writing their own cancer story helped them process and prepare for mentoring others. If you are interested, we suggest the following prompts to get started reflecting on your cancer story:

1. Write about your initial diagnosis, the feelings that emerged and how life shifted.
2. Reflect on your feelings throughout your experience, how this impacted your life, and how you perceived yourself before, during, and after your cancer diagnosis.
3. Looking back, what advice would you have given yourself? How have you changed? What have you learned?
4. We know many people seek to be Mentors to serve and help others. What do you hope to gain from being a Mentor? Are there skills you want to learn? What growth would you like to see within yourself?

Adapted from Zachary, 2000<sup>8</sup>

# Mentor Motivation Checklist

You will not have to turn in this list, but it is designed to have you think about why mentoring appeals to you. For each item below check the “yes” column if that item is a reason why mentoring appeals to you. If the item is not why you want to Mentor, check the “no” column. For each item list a concrete example to illustrate your choice. Note that this is not a Mentor selection tool, but an exercise to increase your awareness.

Prompt	Yes	No	Example
I love having others come to me for advice or guidance.			
Helping others succeed is personally rewarding.			
I have specific knowledge that I want to pass on to others so it is not lost.			
I enjoy collaborative learning.			
I find working with others who are different from me to be energizing.			
I see mentoring as an opportunity to further my own growth.			
Through mentoring I can contribute to others			

My primary motivation for mentoring is:

<sup>8</sup> Zachary, L. J. (2000). *The mentor's guide: Facilitating effective learning relationships*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

# Advice from Current Mentors



**Marx**

"Mentees have to believe you are sincere and feel your empathy. You truly have the ability to empower them - and offer hope."



**Lidia**

"Be yourself. Share your story with your Mentee - if helpful. Lead with check-ins - your Mentee is the focus."



**Vanessa**

"Listen, be available - and what means 'available' to you may not be for them, always ask questions for what is best for THEM. Remember how chaotic cancer is - intentionality is key."



**Dave**

"You have to build trust first - then you can help build hope and help your Mentee envision a new future."

# Mental Health Resources

**Mentor Angels,** If your Mentee is experiencing a mental health crisis or has expressed suicidal ideation, please follow the three steps below immediately.

**1. Call emergency services.** If you know where your Mentee is located, you can Google the direct line for their local 9-1-1 services (your local 9-1-1 operator will not be able to transfer you). Explain the situation to the operator and **request a welfare check** for your Mentee.

**2. Contact Imerman Angels.** Call our staff at 1-866-IMERMAN (463-7626) ASAP to tell us about your concerns. If you are contacting us on a weekend or in the evening after work hours, please leave a detailed message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

**3. Step back.** After you've spoken with the Imerman Angels staff and alerted us to the situation, do not bombard your Mentee with follow-up calls, texts, and emails. Step back and await further guidance from Imerman Angels staff.

**Support Seekers,** your mental health is extremely important to us. We've compiled this list of mental health resources to support you and your overall well-being.

## Emergency Mental Health Resources

(all listings available 24 hours; 7 days a week):

**911** or Google “[city name] emergency service number” to request a **welfare check** for someone else

### 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call 988

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Chat

[chat.988lifeline.org](https://chat.988lifeline.org)

### The Trevor Project

1-866-488-7386 or

Text “start” to 678678

### SAMHSA

(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

1-877-662-HELP (4357)

## NON-Emergency Mental Health Resources

### NAMI

(National Alliance of Mental Illness)

800-950-6264 or

Text “helpline” to 62640

### Give an Hour

[giveanhour.org](https://giveanhour.org)

Mental health resources for members of the military, veterans and their families.

### American Cancer Society Resource Helpline:

1-800-227-2345

Cancer Support Community Helpline

**1-888-793-9355**

### Triage Cancer Quick Guide to Accessing Mental Health Care

[triagecancer.org/QuickGuide-MentalHealth-PDF](https://triagecancer.org/QuickGuide-MentalHealth-PDF)

### National Comprehensive Cancer Network

Patient Guidelines for Distress During Cancer Care:

[nccn.org/patients/guidelines/content/PDF/distress-patient.pdf](https://nccn.org/patients/guidelines/content/PDF/distress-patient.pdf)

# Mental Health Resources

## Resources for Locating Counseling and Therapy

### FindTreatment.gov

[findtreatment.gov](https://findtreatment.gov)

Online database of mental health and substance use resources

### Psychology Today

[psychologytoday.com/us](https://psychologytoday.com/us)

Online database of therapists and counselors

### American Psychological Association

[locator.apa.org](https://locator.apa.org)

Online Psychologist locator

### Financial Assistance for Mental Health Care

HealthWell Foundation

[healthwellfoundation.org](https://healthwellfoundation.org)

### Cancer Care Financial Resources\*

[cancercare.org/financial\\_assistance](https://cancercare.org/financial_assistance)

### Rise Above the Disorder (RAD)

[youarerad.org](https://youarerad.org)

## Resources for Support Seekers Waiting for Match

### Warm Lines

[screening.mhanational.org](https://screening.mhanational.org)

Online database of peer-run hotlines that offer callers emotional support

### Cancer Care\*

[cancercare.org/tagged/caregiving](https://cancercare.org/tagged/caregiving)

Educational materials and telephone-based counseling

### I'm Alive Online Crisis Network

[imalive.org](https://imalive.org)

*\* Cancer Care services available to residents of New York and New Jersey only.*

## Mental Health Resources for SPANISH Speakers

### SAMHSA Treatment Referral Helpline

(English and Spanish)

1-877-726-4727

### National Suicide Prevention Spanish Lifeline

1-888-628-9454

### National Alliance for Hispanic Health

[healthyamericas.org](https://healthyamericas.org)

### Su Familia Helpline, National Alliance for Hispanic Health

1 866 Su Familia (1-866-783 2645)

## International Resources

### Find a Helpline

[findahelpline.com](https://findahelpline.com)

Online database of international helplines searchable by country





# Other Ways to Help Imerman Angels

Our #1 challenge is finding more cancer fighters, survivors, previvors and caregivers to volunteer. Please help us increase awareness of our mission.

- Tell us about opportunities in your community to promote Imerman Angels.
- Use online social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) to promote Imerman Angels to your community. Here are a few examples:
  - Let people know about Imerman Angels via online discussions.
  - Post a comment on a cancer blog or another cancer-related website with a link to the Imerman Angels website.
  - Follow us on social media and share our posts.
- Promote Imerman Angels with a healthcare professional that might interact with cancer fighters, survivors, previvors or caregivers (ex. Share our brochure, etc.).
- Share information about Imerman Angels at work or other organizations with which you are involved.
- Connect with other Mentor Angels in the Facebook Community: Imerman Angels Mentor Community.
- Order our free brochures online at [imermanangels.org/brochures](https://imermanangels.org/brochures).
- Wear Imerman Angels gear (t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats) available at [cloztalk.com/collections/imerman-angels](https://cloztalk.com/collections/imerman-angels).
- Host your own event to help raise awareness: [imermanangels.org/host-your-own-event](https://imermanangels.org/host-your-own-event).
- Join our volunteer program. Contact the office for more information or [visit our website for volunteer opportunities](#).

# Frequently Asked Questions



## **How are potential Mentor Angels screened and trained?**

All potential Mentor Angels are personally screened over the phone by our Cancer Support Specialists. Each screening conversation is thorough and the process is intended to allow for the flexibility to accept potential Mentor Angels on a case-by-case basis from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Mentor Angels are expected to nurture a supportive, encouraging and friendly mentorship with a cancer fighter, survivor, previvor or caregiver without dispensing medical advice. All Mentor Angels agree to terms and conditions, zero tolerance policy and receive training materials when they register online.

## **What happens if Imerman Angels cannot find a match for a certain type of cancer?**

We have the world's largest network of cancer survivors and caregivers dedicated to providing one-on-one cancer support. Occasionally an exact match cannot be found internally. In those instances, we reach out to our network of cancer partner organizations and hospital partners to find a match.

## **How does Imerman Angels secure my information?**

Imerman Angels is committed to protecting the personal information you entrust to us. We use organizational, technical and administrative measures designed to protect personal information within our organization. If you have reason to believe that your interaction with us is no longer secure, please contact us at [info@imermanangels.org](mailto:info@imermanangels.org).

## **Are any connections between Mentor Angels and those requesting support completely automated online?**

No - each Support Seeker and Mentor Angel is personally screened by a Cancer Support Specialist from Imerman Angels. These Cancer Support Specialists are in contact with both the Support Seeker and Mentor Angel to ensure that each connection is meaningful and impactful.

## **What communication methods do Mentor Angels and Support Seekers use?**

Together they decide how they would like to keep in touch in a way that is convenient for the Support Seekers. Examples include: telephone, e-mail, video chat, Zoom, text messaging, social media, and/or face-to-face meetings.

### **How often do Mentor Angels and Support Seekers communicate?**

Each pair determines the frequency and duration of their contact and is generally guided by the needs of the Support Seeker. Some pairs speak regularly and have even traveled great distances to meet in person. However, you should never feel pressured into communicating more frequently with your Support Seeker than seems reasonable and appropriate. Please give us a call if you find yourself in this position.

Other pairs require less contact. Sometimes all that is needed is one or two points of communication, and that's fine, as long as the Support Seeker's needs are met.

Please Note: Mentor Angels should make three attempts when reaching out to their Support Seeker, at least one email, and one phone call if that information is provided. If they do not hear back from their Support Seeker after three attempts, Mentor Angels should contact Imerman Angels to verify that the contact information is correct.

### **How are connected Mentor Angels and Support Seekers monitored? Is there any follow up?**

We send out a follow-up survey one month after you are matched and then again six months after you are matched. These surveys ensure the quality of our program for both the Support Seeker and the Mentor.

### **Do Mentor Angels and Support Seekers need to live in the same city?**

No. Support Seekers and Mentors could be living anywhere, as long as they are able to communicate in a way that works for both of them. A Support Seeker can also indicate a preference for finding a local match and we will do our best to fulfill their request.

### **What happens if a Mentor Angel relapses while they are paired with a Support Seeker?**

We encourage our Mentor Angels to contact one of our Cancer Support Specialists if there's ever an extenuating circumstance of any kind. The Cancer Support Specialist will help determine a mutually beneficial solution. In fact, additional support can be provided for the Mentor Angel if they feel they need it.

### **What happens if the match between a Mentor Angel and a Support Seeker is not a good fit for any reason?**

The Support Seeker and/or Mentor Angel should contact one of our Cancer Support Specialists to help find a mutually beneficial solution.

### **Can a Support Seeker be matched with multiple Mentor Angels?**

Absolutely. Each person's cancer experience is different and sometimes it is helpful to talk to different Mentor Angels for different topics.

### **Does Imerman Angels give medical advice?**

Never. All of our Mentor Angels, staff, and volunteers are trained to never give medical advice or to diagnose a medical problem.

### **How does Imerman Angels ensure that Mentor Angels refrain from giving medical advice?**

Our training materials require each Mentor Angel to agree to these terms which state they should refrain from giving medical advice.

### **Is Imerman Angels able to help cancer fighters, survivors, previvors and caregivers across the world?**

Yes. Our free service is available to anyone, any gender, cancer type, or stage level anywhere in the world.

### **Does Imerman Angels help people with any illnesses in addition to cancer?**

In order to ensure the highest quality of service and mission fulfillment, we are dedicated to helping cancer fighters, survivors, previvors, and caregivers. We can make a referral to one of our partner organizations for someone facing a different illness.

### **How much does it cost to use the Imerman Angels services?**

All of our services are free. We are committed to ensuring that no one faces cancer alone.

### **How long do the relationships need to last between a Mentor and Support Seeker?**

These relationships can be very brief or last a lifetime. Some Support Seekers only have a few questions that they need answered, other Support Seekers are looking for support during treatment, and beyond. The Mentor Angel should follow the lead of their Support Seeker to know when and if the relationship has run its course.

### **Which cancer types can Imerman Angels match?**

We can match any cancer type and any stage. If we are unable to find an exact match within our network, we will reach out to our cancer partners to find the best match.

### **What kind of questions do Support Seekers typically ask their Mentor Angels? What issues are discussed?**

The relationship between a Support Seeker and a Mentor Angel is natural, friendly, and supportive in nature. Topics of conversation might include: pain issues; what treatments and side effects feel like; experience navigating the medical system; support from family and friends; relationships, dating, sex, fertility, children; tips like how eating lemon-flavored candy can neutralize the metallic taste caused by chemo; issues that can result from dealing with cancer; diet and exercise.

### **Can Imerman Angels help the friends and family of cancer fighters?**

Yes. Imerman Angels supports anyone impacted by cancer - parents, siblings, childrens, partners, etc.

### **Is Imerman Angels capable of matching those that are caring for a loved one that is passing or has passed?**

Yes, we have Caregiver Mentor Angels that have dealt with the end of life, hospice, and bereavement who can share their insight.

### **How much time is needed after being declared to have no evidence of disease before a Survivor is ready to be a Mentor Angel?**

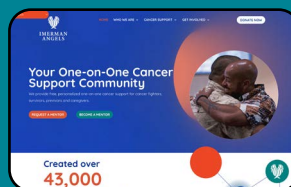
Everyone's cancer experience is unique. That's why we work on a case-by-case basis with each cancer fighter, survivor, previvor, and caregiver instead of requiring a specific amount of time to be away from treatments.

### **How does Imerman Angels find cancer fighters, survivors, previvors and caregivers?**

We use every resource to recruit and retain a vibrant group of Mentor Angels and Support Seekers. We are always looking for more ways to connect with people in need. If you have a suggestion, please contact us. Some examples include referrals from the medical community or cancer partner organizations, word of mouth, media, social media, speeches, and events.

### **How are donations made to Imerman Angels used?**

Donations play a critical role in helping us accomplish our mission. Funding helps us hire and train Cancer Support Specialists, conduct outreach to cancer fighters, survivors, and caregivers, and build tools and resources that make our one-on-one support services outstanding!



For more resources and answers please visit our website at [ImermanAngels.org](https://ImermanAngels.org)

# Contact Imerman Angels

**Imerman Angels**

2001 N. Halsted St.  
Ste 302  
Chicago IL 60614

**Toll Free Number**

866-IMERMAN (463-7626)

**Fax**

312-274-5530

[imermanangels.org](http://imermanangels.org)  
[info@imermanangels.org](mailto:info@imermanangels.org)

 [facebook.com/imermanangels](https://facebook.com/imermanangels)

 [twitter.com/imermanangels](https://twitter.com/imermanangels)

 [instagram.com/imermanangels](https://instagram.com/imermanangels)

 [pinterest.com/imermanangels](https://pinterest.com/imermanangels)

 [youtube.com/user/imermanangels](https://youtube.com/user/imermanangels)

 [linkedin.com/company/imerman-angels](https://linkedin.com/company/imerman-angels)