

NYBRA

PLASTIC SURGERY

— 2024 —

New York Breast Reconstruction
& Aesthetic Plastic Surgery

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we embark on 2024, we reflect on a year filled with growth, achievement, and inspiration. At NYBRA Plastic Surgery, our mission remains steadfast: to deliver exceptional care, empower patients, and foster a community rooted in education and support.

Since the official launch of **BreastReconstruction.org** in October 2023 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, this resource has rapidly expanded its reach and impact, becoming a cornerstone for education and advocacy in breast reconstruction. With initiatives like the Plastic Surgery Foundation-supported video series, a growing social media presence, and collaborations with new partners, BreastReconstruction.org is already shaping the future of patient empowerment and care.

In 2024, we are thrilled to see this resource continue to thrive as a hub for education and inspiration. As founding partners and members of the board, our surgeons remain committed to guiding its ongoing success.

This past year also brought us moments of celebration and recognition within our practice. **Dr. David Light** and **Dr. Randall Feingold** were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the community. Their dedication reflects the heart of our practice and the profound impact of advocacy and care.

Dr. Jonathan Bank's Resilience documentary has received awards of excellence. Together with **Dr. Ron Israeli**, he also presented their joint art exhibit, Retrospect, showcasing the intersection of artistry and medicine in their work. Through countless Instagram Live events, our team engaged directly with the community, sharing critical education about breast reconstruction and connecting with patients worldwide.

This year, we continued to be inspired by the strength and courage of our patients—especially those in our **Patient Empowerment Program**—who continue to support and uplift one another in transformative ways. Their resilience reminds us why we do this work and fuels our commitment to excellence. This year also marks a bittersweet transition for our Mollie Sugarman, who enters retirement and Celeste Rivera, PhD who joins our team as her successor.

In the spirit of gratitude and giving, we mark the start of this new year with a donation in lieu of gifts. This gesture underscores our shared values of community, compassion, and impact.

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership. Together, we look forward to another year of growth, collaboration, and meaningful change.

Warm regards,



Randall S. Feingold, MD



Ron Israeli, MD



Peter Korn, MD



David Light, MD



Jonathan Bank, MD

CONTENTS

PATIENT PERSPECTIVES

- 4 Post Traumatic Growth: Inspiring Stories of Three Thrivers
- 6 Our Patient, Ginny, Looks Forward To A Long and Lucky Life

FROM OUR PRACTITIONERS

- 8 The ‘Resilience’ Documentary and Event Highlights
- 10 Dr. Light recipient of Sharsheret Maimonides Award
- 11 Anna Crollman Recognized for Her Advocacy and Strength at 2024 Butterfly Ball
- 12 Retrospect: The Individual Art of Collaboration in Reconstructive Surgery
- 14 NYBRA at the FORCE Annual Conference
- 16 Drs. Israeli and Bank Featured in USA Today Editorial by American Society of Plastic Surgeons

COMMUNITY

- 18 Our Community Partnerships
- 19 The American Cancer Society’s 17th Annual Doctors of Distinction Golf Invitational
- 20 Instagram Live Events With BreastReconstruction.org
- 22 Making Strides
- 24 Celebrating Service: Dr. Randall Feingold Receives 2024 Eugene D. O’Kelly Award for Philanthropy
- 26 Patient Safety Comes First
- 27 Teaching DIEP Flaps at the 2024 American Society of Plastic Surgeons Meeting
- 28 PINK ROCKS BROADWAY!
- 29 Education by Virtual Presentations

PATIENT EMPOWERMENT

- 30 Transitions: Special Announcement from Mollie Sugarman
- 31 Welcoming Dr. Celeste Rivera: New Clinical Director of the Patient Empowerment Program
- 32 Save The Date: Inaugural Gala – The Uplifting Event – Thursday, May 8, 2025
- 33 Marnie Rustemeyer featured on the Her Take series on @LifetimeTV
- 34 Holding Space for a Partner’s Needs When a Couple Confronts Breast Cancer
- 36 The Art of Listening
- 38 Be Informed Lecture Series

YEAR IN REVIEW

- 40 Our Numbers Speak Volumes

Post Traumatic Growth: Inspiring Stories of Three Thrivers

By The NYBRA Team

In a powerful and enlightening discussion led by Mollie Sugarman and Dr. Ron Israeli, three women—Dana, Abby, and Donna—shared their deeply personal experiences with breast cancer diagnosis, treatment, risk-reducing surgery, and breast reconstruction. The conversation highlighted not only the physical aspects of their journeys but also the emotional, psychological, and practical challenges that accompany such a life-altering diagnosis. Through their stories, the panelists offered a message of empowerment, self-discovery, and resilience that resonates with anyone navigating the breast cancer experience.

Setting the Tone for Healing

Abby kicked off the conversation by discussing how she learned to set the tone for her healing journey. A key aspect of this process was communicating her needs clearly to family and friends, ensuring they mirrored her own positivity and resilience. Abby explained that by doing so, she was able to avoid the fear-driven reactions of others that could have exacerbated her anxieties. She stressed the importance of boundaries, acknowledging that while it can be difficult to prioritize one's own needs, doing so is essential for maintaining well-being. "My well-being required me to prioritize my needs over people-pleasing tendencies," she remarked, underscoring the significance of self-care during such a vulnerable time.

Navigating Relationships and Understanding Reactions

Dana shared the emotional toll of losing friends after her diagnosis, revealing that their withdrawal was often driven by fear of loss, not



A Conversation with Dr. Israeli and Mollie Sugarman

malice. Reflecting on this, she recounted a conversation with one friend years later that revealed the deep fear and helplessness that had kept her friend at a distance. Dana's experience served as a powerful reminder of the emotional complexities surrounding relationships during cancer treatment and how important it is to approach these situations with compassion. This newfound understanding helped Dana process her feelings of abandonment and navigate relationships with greater empathy.

Resilience Through Self-Reflection and Action

The panelists also discussed the non-linear nature of grief and healing. Abby shared a story of how a routine medical encounter triggered anxiety, leading her to use meditation and grounding techniques to regain control. This moment highlighted the value of self-compassion

Patient Perspectives

and the importance of having practical coping mechanisms in place when overwhelming emotions arise.

Donna spoke about the transformative power of focusing on something larger than oneself. By channeling her pain into meaningful pursuits and passions, she found a source of empowerment and healing. Both Donna and Abby agreed on the importance of clear communication, particularly when it came to well-meaning but impractical gestures from loved ones. For instance, while receiving an abundance of comfort items might feel thoughtful, it's essential for patients to communicate what they truly need to avoid unnecessary stress.

Rediscovering Strength and Growth

Dana likened her cancer journey to a process of accelerated growth, akin to the wisdom and empowerment often gained through aging. She learned to assert her boundaries, prioritize her needs, and reject negativity. All three women emphasized that healing is an ongoing process—one that requires continuous self-reflection, resilience, and the openness to embrace each day as an opportunity for growth and joy.

Through their courageous storytelling, the panelists not only offered hope and guidance to those facing similar challenges but also reaffirmed the strength that comes from sharing one's journey with others.

Scan QR Code
to watch video.



Advice for Newly Diagnosed Patients

When asked for advice for those newly diagnosed or considering risk-reducing surgery and reconstruction, the panelists shared their heartfelt guidance:



“Take life one step at a time. Healing is a journey, and it’s okay to allow yourself space to grow. Each day presents an opportunity to rediscover happiness.”

~ Dana Donofree



“Embrace all emotions with compassion. When you feel overwhelmed, pause to recenter and ground yourself. Acknowledge your fears, but don’t let them control you.”

~ Abby Match



“Allow yourself to grieve, cry, or express anger. Surround yourself with genuine love and support. Focus on purposeful activities that bring you fulfillment and peace.”

~ Dr. Donna Bacon

Our Patient, Ginny, Looks Forward To A Long and Lucky Life

By The NYBRA Team

When Ginny was called back for a needle biopsy after her routine breast cancer screening in August, 2021, she said she really didn't think anything of it. She had had needle biopsies before. The results had always been normal. The only difference this time was that it had been longer-than-usual since her last mammogram.

"I had just gotten married to my amazing spouse, Martha, in July. Because that was all kind of post-COVID, I hadn't done a mammogram or sonogram in a year or two," she explained.

Ginny did not receive the results of her needle biopsy until she saw her primary care doctor in September, 2021. It was there that she learned that she had invasive lobular carcinoma.

"You feel a little shell-shocked when you get told something like that."

In spite of the shell-shock, Ginny quickly began to choose doctors and make decisions about her health, with Martha by her side for support at nearly every appointment. Ginny said she knew she wanted bilateral mastectomies straight away.

"The decision of mastectomy versus lumpectomy was very clear to me. It was like, 'get all of that tissue out.' For me, it was 100-percent the right choice."

She was confident in her initial procedure, however, she found herself less

certain when it came to breast reconstruction. She was not sure what her choices were. She did know one thing: implants were not an option.

"I don't know why, but I did not like the thought of artificial implants. I thought I would probably go flat before I do that."

Fortunately, Ginny found her way to a consultation with Dr. Randall Feingold at NYBRA. He provided natural tissue reconstruction options and put her at ease. The Clinical Director of the Patient Empowerment Program, Mollie Sugarman, also ensured that she and Martha feel safe and comfortable.

"The lightness of the NYBRA office and Mollie Sugarman and Dr. Feingold and his warmth and voice and cadence—it helps you feel OK. Especially having Mollie there, that part was sort of magical. It all shows that the office has put so much into taking care of people for more than surgical needs."

Ginny underwent bilateral mastectomies with immediate DIEP flap breast reconstruction on October 29, 2021. She said she went into the procedure feeling confident despite the fact that she had never had any type of surgery before. Postoperative pathology revealed lobular carcinoma in situ in the opposite breast, confirming Ginny's instinct to pursue bilateral mastectomies. She also underwent a year of chemotherapy, beginning in December, 2021.

Patient Perspectives

“Microsurgical breast reconstruction has provided Ginny with a soft, warm restoration that allows her, and Martha, to resume the active, free-spirited lifestyle she thought was unachievable. This is the best part of plastic surgery, returning people to their happy, pre-op state of mind,” Dr. Feingold explained.

“Witnessing the incredible bond between Ginny and Martha is a testament to the transformative power of a nurturing and supportive relationship. Their journey towards physical and emotional restoration serves as a shining example of what can be achieved when one has a strong support system,” Mollie added.

Since her initial procedure, Ginny has had four revision surgeries. While she did not understand that breast reconstruction often requires several revisions at the outset, she explained that she was not necessarily upset by that lack of understanding.

“I didn’t realize that the revisions would be ongoing, but I’m not sure that would have been useful to hear in the throes of it,” she said. She continued with a classic Mollie-ism*, “In that sense, I am grateful to have learned what I needed to know when I needed to know it.”

More than anything, Ginny said that right now, she feels lucky—in reconstruction and in life.

“I know doctors deal with cancer every day, but I don’t. I don’t know how common an office like NYBRA is, but in my little experience, it’s not that common. I feel lucky for what was around me. And I feel incredibly lucky to have a partner who is so here and present for all of it. Hopefully I live a long life.”

**A Mollie-ism is a term NYBRA patients use to describe a common refrain from PEP Clinical Director, Mollie Sugarman.*



The 'Resilience' Documentary and Event Highlights

By The NYBRA Team

Resilience is an inspiring documentary that tells the story of Lisa Csencsits, a Breast Relief patient and Relievr user who took her recovery journey to new heights. Initially documented in a short film completed in 2022, the project quickly grew into a larger, more powerful tale. The expanded version, titled **Resilience**, was released in 2024 and delves deeper into Lisa's journey. Edited by Sundance Award-winning film editor David Trachtenberg, the film explores the circumstances that led Lisa to undergo risk-reducing mastectomies and the choices she made in the aftermath.

On its surface, **Resilience** is a unique story of balancing a genetic predisposition to breast cancer with an extraordinary talent for world-class cycling. At its core, however, it serves as a universal inspiration about living with our genetic inheritance, within the context of complex intergenerational relationships.

The documentary follows Lisa's challenging recovery after undergoing mastectomies, showing her determination to not only heal but to compete at the highest level. Despite these obstacles, Lisa went on to contend for the U.S. National Championships in cycling. Her story is deeply intertwined with her genetic heritage—an increased risk for breast cancer and an incredible ability to convert oxygen into energy, fueling her cycling prowess.

As both traits were inherited from her maternal side, the film also explores the intricate family dynamics at play, including a decade-long rift with her mother, which adds an emotional layer to her pursuit of healing and success.

Written and produced by Sundance Award-winning filmmaker David Trachtenberg and plastic surgeon Jonathan Bank, MD, with the support of BreastReconstruction.org, **Resilience** is a compelling portrayal of strength, courage, and the complexity of the human spirit.



Documentaries Without Borders Film Festival

- *Official Selection*
- *Outstanding Excellence*



Scan QR Code
to watch video.



From Our Practitioners



*Photos from Documentary

Dr. Light recipient of Sharsheret Maimonides Award

By The NYBRA Team

Dr. David Light was honored with the prestigious Maimonides Award at Sharsheret's 2024 Tristate Benefit on August 8th. The event, held at the Lawrence Yacht and Country Club on Long Island, brought together over 400 community members to support Sharsheret's mission of improving the lives of women and families affected by breast and ovarian cancer.

Dr. Light's recognition highlights his impactful partnership with Sharsheret, where he has contributed to educational initiatives that raise awareness about breast reconstruction options. As an advocate for patient education and informed decision-making, he has been a vital part of advancing healthcare support for women facing these challenges.

The Tristate Benefit celebrated the collective achievements of honorees and the community in creating a chain of support for those affected by cancer. Dr. Light expressed his gratitude for the award, emphasizing the importance of Sharsheret's work and inviting continued community support. The event underscored the significance of collaboration in driving meaningful change for patients and their families.



Anna Crollman Recognized for Her Advocacy and Strength at 2024 Butterfly Ball

By Ron Israeli, MD

On November 16, 2024, I had the honor of attending the Living Beyond Breast Cancer (LBBC) Annual Butterfly Ball, an event that brings together a community of patients and advocates to raise critical funds for LBBC mission-driven breast cancer initiatives. This year my patient Anna Crollman was recognized as the 2024 Donna Noce Colaco Going Beyond Honoree. To see her celebrated for her bravery, resilience, and unwavering dedication to supporting others in their breast cancer journeys was inspiring.

The Butterfly Ball itself is a celebration of individuals like Anna, and it serves as a reminder of the importance of community in the fight against breast cancer. The evening is always filled with powerful stories and shared moments of triumph, but this year was particularly meaningful. Anna's recognition was more than just a personal achievement—it was a collective acknowledgment of the incredible support system we have in the breast cancer community, one that includes patients, caregivers, advocates, and organizations like LBBC that make such a profound difference.



I was especially touched to celebrate this special occasion with my patients Dana Donofree, Abby Match, Chelsey Pickthorn, and Michelle Rechenberg. These women, among so many others at the event that night share a unique bond that goes beyond breast cancer—they are part of a sisterhood that stands together in strength and solidarity.

Retrospect: The Individual Art of Collaboration in Reconstructive Surgery

By The NYBRA Team

On Sunday, September 29, the Art League of Long Island hosted the opening reception for **Retrospect: The Individual Art of Collaboration in Reconstructive Surgery**, an extraordinary exhibit spearheaded by Dr. Ron Israeli and Dr. Jonathan Bank. This unique retrospective exhibit explored themes of breast reconstruction, restoration, renewal, and resilience through a combination of sculpture, photography, and painting.

The exhibit, open from September 28 to October 18, offered an intimate look into the innovative and collaborative art projects that Drs. Israeli and Bank have created over the years. Their partnership began in 2012 with Dr. Israeli's **Restored** project and has since flourished into a multifaceted artistic and professional collaboration. The addition of world-renowned photographer Erez Sabag brought a fresh, visual depth to their work, enhancing the storytelling behind each piece.

The Projects

The exhibit featured several key projects, each representing a distinct phase in the artists' journey:

- **Reconstructed** (2018): Conceived by Dr. Bank and inspired by the Japanese art of kintsugi, this project used Sabag's photography to symbolize healing as an enhancement of inherent beauty.
- **Before the After** (2021): Dr. Bank's introspective work utilized cropped clinical photographs to capture the unguarded moments just before and after surgery, revealing the vulnerable transitions that often remain hidden from public view.
- **Restored** (2021): Revisited as a joint effort led by Drs. Israeli and Bank, this project used life cast sculptures and Sabag's photography to illustrate the transformative experience of post-mastectomy breast reconstruction.
- **Reblossom** (2023): This collaboration between Dr. Bank and Sabag, paralleled the resilience of women undergoing mastectomy with the regeneration of flowers serving as a testament to survival, renewal, and the beauty of new beginnings.
- Dr. Israeli's series of large-scale oil paintings of surgical scenes offered a rare glimpse into the operating room, capturing the collaborative artistry inherent in surgery.

The Art of Collaboration

Retrospect underscores the profound synergy between personal artistry and professional collaboration. Drs. Israeli and Bank's projects exemplify how art can amplify the healing process, transforming the surgical experience into a narrative of empowerment and beauty.

From Our Practitioners



NYBRA at the FORCE Annual Conference

By The NYBRA Team

This year, our NYBRA team had the privilege of attending the FORCE (Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered) annual conference in Philadelphia, PA. We were excited to join forces with the BreastReconstruction.org team to offer valuable insights into breast reconstruction options, especially for those facing hereditary cancer risks.

FORCE, celebrating 25 years of empowering individuals affected by genetic cancer risks, hosted a dynamic event that brought together patients, survivors, and healthcare professionals to share knowledge and resources. The conference included a wide range of discussions on breast and reproductive cancers, genetic testing, and the latest advancements in treatment and reconstruction.

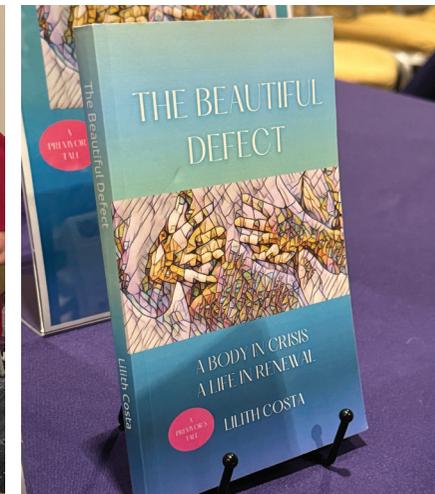
Our collaboration with the BreastReconstruction.org team allowed us to contribute our expertise to the “Show and Tell” session, where Drs. Ron Israeli, David Light, and Jonathan Bank shared real-time insights into breast reconstruction procedures. This session offered an in-depth look at reconstruction outcomes and gave participants the opportunity to ask questions and engage with experts.

Alongside our partners at Resensation, we were pleased to highlight the innovative nerve repair technology that’s helping to improve sensation for patients undergoing both implant-based and natural tissue reconstruction. This is a significant step forward in improving

the physical and emotional recovery process for individuals navigating reconstruction after mastectomy.

We also had the privilege of sharing personal stories and resources that resonate deeply within our community. Among these, we featured *The Beautiful Defect* by Lilith Costa, a poignant memoir of her journey as a previvor and breast reconstruction patient. We also presented *Restored and Reblossom*, books created in collaboration with Allergan Aesthetics that highlight the beauty and resilience of restoration and healing.

We look forward to continuing our efforts to support those navigating breast cancer and the complex journey of reconstruction.





Drs. Israeli and Bank Featured in USA Today Editorial by American Society of Plastic Surgeons

By The NYBRA Team

As nearly every NYBRA patient knows, there is no universal path when it comes to breast reconstruction. It is a complex road full of options that vary based on everything from a patient's individual treatment plan, lifestyle body type, aesthetic goals, and more. The best path is the one that is tailored to your needs.

Drs. Ron Israeli and Jonathan Bank sat down with the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) to talk about the importance of consulting a plastic surgeon early when it comes to breast reconstruction.

The piece provides an overview of how a plastic surgeon's input can benefit you and your care team throughout the mastectomy and reconstruction process. Read on for some highlights from the conversation or check out the whole thing here.

A plastic surgeon can help you make sense of your options.

"This is a very stressful time," Dr. Israeli said in the article. "A plastic surgeon can help patients navigate the decision-making and allow them to understand there is light at the end of the tunnel because someone will help them achieve their aesthetic goals."

Plastic surgeons with expertise in microsurgery can help manage nerves and restore sensation during mastectomy and reconstruction.

"When nothing is done to repair the nerves, communication between the brain and the chest gets disrupted, diminishing the ability for nerves to function normally. This can lead to partial or complete numbness that may be permanent," Dr. Bank explained in the piece.

He continued: "Through advanced breast reconstruction techniques, plastic surgeons can help restore the important function of sensation. Studies show that regaining sensation can provide a variety of benefits for patients including improved physical safety, emotional well-being, and overall quality of life."

Your plastic surgeon will often be by your side through multiple procedures.

"Almost always there's an advantage to being open to having additional procedures to achieve the best outcome," Dr. Israeli told ASPS. "A second procedure may be minor, such as a skin adjustment or grafting fat from elsewhere to soften the breast."

Breast reconstruction is protected by law.

The federal 1998 Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act (WHCRA) requires group health insurance plans to cover reconstructive surgery, regardless of the number of revisions.

From Our Practitioners

“This is a decision to be made by the patient and her doctor, not the insurance company,” Dr. Israeli said.

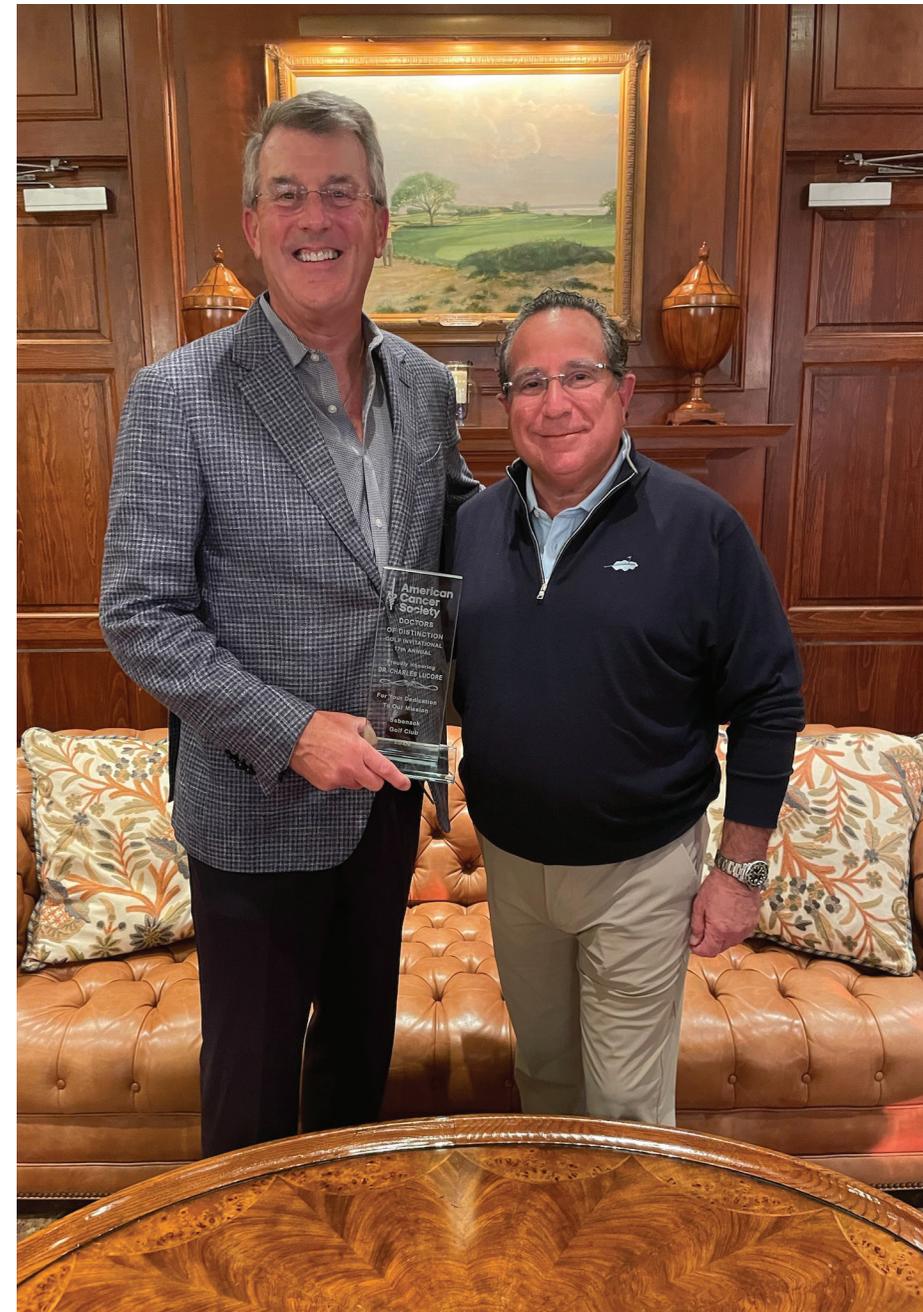
If you’re considering breast reconstruction, contact NYBRA Plastic Surgery today to explore your options with our expert team. We are with you every step of the way.

“Through advanced breast reconstruction techniques, plastic surgeons can help restore the important function of sensation. Studies show that regaining sensation can provide a variety of benefits for patients including improved physical safety, emotional well-being, and overall quality of life.”



Our Community Partnerships

- Adelphi Breast Cancer Program
- AiRS Foundation
- American Cancer Society Doctors of Distinction Golf Invitational – Chairman
- American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk – Flagship Sponsor
- Breast Cancer Comfort Foundation
- BRCAStrong
- BreastReconstruction.org
- DiepC Foundation
- Full Circle Physical Therapy
- Got Checked
- Ivy Rehab
- Lean on Me Breast Cancer Network
- Living Beyond Breast Cancer
- Manhasset Women’s Coalition Against Breast Cancer
- PALS SkyHope
- Pink Aid
- Sharsheret





The American Cancer Society's 17th Annual Doctors of Distinction Golf Invitational

By Randall S. Feingold, MD

It has long been a tradition of our practice to raise funds for cancer research and cancer care through the American Cancer Society. In 2007, my partner Dr. Israeli and I were honored as Doctors of Distinction by the American Cancer Society. Following this recognition, I inaugurated a boutique golf outing to bring together physicians, surgeons, philanthropists, and friends to honor a clinician, educator, or researcher making an impact in the field of cancer.

This year marked the 17th annual American Cancer Society's Doctors of Distinction Golf Invitational, which I had the privilege of chairing on September 9, 2024, at Sebonack Golf Club in Southampton, NY. It was a beautiful, sunny day as our esteemed golfers enjoyed a round of golf at this spectacular venue in support of a meaningful cause. Our honoree, Dr. Charles Lucore, President of St. Francis Hospital, spoke about the vital role of hospital teamwork in patient-focused cancer care, our institution's commitment to delivering state-of-the-art technology, and the importance of the American Cancer Society.

*Community partnerships are
a cornerstone of our practice.*

Instagram Live Events With BreastReconstruction.org

By The NYBRA Team

Supporting Your body before, during and after breast reconstruction



Scan QR Code to watch video.

Dr. David Light and Aubrey Redd, a nutritionist from Unite for HER, discussed the importance of diet, exercise, and overall wellness in relation to mastectomy and breast reconstruction. They highlighted how these factors are vital before, during, and after surgery. Together, they provided expert insights on how maintaining a healthy lifestyle can support recovery and improve outcomes for patients.

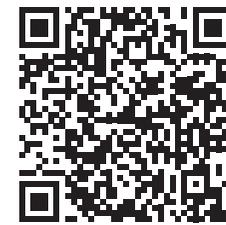
Get Back the Feeling; Restoring Breast Sensation



Scan QR Code to watch video.

Dr. Jonathan Bank, Emily Hansen from Resensation, and Susy Solino, a Resensation patient, discuss the groundbreaking Resensation procedure. They explain how the procedure uses nerve grafts to restore breast sensation during breast reconstruction after mastectomy. The conversation highlights the physical and psychological impact of post-mastectomy numbness and the potential of Resensation to improve both recovery and emotional well-being.

Unlocking Genetics: Personal Journeys & Surgical Choices



Scan QR Code to watch video.

Dr. Randall Feingold, genetic counselor Emily Goldberg, and patient Lilith Costa discussed the impact of genetic testing on breast cancer prevention and reconstruction. They covered available tests, who should consider testing, and how to use the information for optimal outcomes. Lilith shared her personal experience with risk-reducing mastectomies and DIEP flap reconstruction. Her book, *The Beautiful Defect*, offers a deeper look into her journey, with the aim of inspiring and guiding others.

Community Conversations: Ask a Surgeon



Scan QR Code
to watch video.

“Community Conversations: Ask a Surgeon” was a live Q&A with Dr. Ron Israeli, Dr. Jonathan Bank, Jean Sachs of Living Beyond Breast Cancer, and Dana Donofree of AnaOno Intimates. The session covered key topics in breast reconstruction, offering expert insights and answering questions. It aimed to provide support and empower those navigating breast cancer recovery.

Importance of physical therapy and pain management



Scan QR Code
to watch video.

In this IG Live, Dr. Jonathan Bank and Diana Tjaden PT, DPT from Full Circle/Ivy Rehab discussed the crucial role of physical therapy in recovery after a mastectomy. They explore various techniques for managing pain and promoting healing. The conversation emphasizes the benefits of early intervention and a personalized approach to care.



The BreastReconstruction.org community is a community that shares information, uplifts those in need, and celebrates narratives and images of women who are not just surviving but thriving beyond mastectomy and reconstruction. Our main goal is to provide comprehensive breast reconstruction information so that every patient has the tools to make the right decision for them. Whether you are at the initial stages, recently diagnosed, or considering delayed reconstruction, we aim to provide everything you need to partner with your surgeon to determine the most suitable type of breast reconstruction for you.

Making Strides

By The NYBRA Team

Two decades ago, Drs. Randall Feingold and Ron Israeli gathered just a handful of patients in the Jones Beach parking lot before sunrise for NYBRA's first Making Strides Against Breast Cancer as a practice. No one knew that it would become a cornerstone in our practice community.

This year, we once again arrived before the sun came up to set up our tent and tables. Familiar faces filed in for sweatshirts, snacks, and salutations as the day kicked off. Our team seized this opportunity to connect and reconnect with patients old and new.

We continue to rank among the top organizations in the country, alongside companies like TJX, Richoh, Penske, NYSUT, Chevrolet and more, proving what a dedicated, tight-knit community can create. We continue to be unyieldingly proud of and amazed by the patients, friends, and colleagues who come together to make this happen each year. ■





MAKING STRIDES AGAINST BREAST CANCER WALK AT JONES BEACH – OCTOBER 20, 2024



Celebrating Service: Dr. Randall Feingold Receives 2024 Eugene D. O'Kelly Award for Philanthropy

By The NYBRA Team

Dr. Randall Feingold was honored with the Eugene D. O'Kelly Award for distinguished service to the American Cancer Society at the 17th annual Financial Services Cares Gala at the Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers in NYC on May 21, 2024. The audience consisted of Wall Street's financial institutions in accounting, banking, consulting, and private equity.

The Eugene D. O'Kelly award for philanthropy, named after the late Chairman and CEO of KPMG, is a prestigious award that has been given to various physicians and corporate leaders since 2006. Dr. Feingold notes that "O'Kelly's book, **Chasing Daylight, How My Forthcoming Death Transformed My Life**, is a humbling read, providing insight into the mind of a remarkable man who faced the greatest challenge with dignity and positive action. Upon receiving a diagnosis of brain cancer, he stepped down from his post 6 days later to reconnect with the people in his life, a journey that only lasted 3 months."

Dr. Feingold began his partnership with the American Cancer Society in 2000, when a handful of patients met at Jones Beach for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk. That grew into a flagship sponsorship with his NYBRA partners and staff attracting 1000 of their patients, families, and their friends to walk each year, becoming one of the top fundraising teams in NY State and the country. He was

honored by the American Cancer Society as a Physician of Distinction in 2007. His committee service includes the Physician Emeritus Board for the Gala of Hope, the Long Island Region Advisory Board, and the Eastern Division Board of Directors. He also established the Doctors of Distinction Golf Invitational in 2008 which held its 17th annual outing on September 9, 2024, at Sebonack Golf Club in Southampton, NY.

In his comments to a standing-room only crowd of donors, Dr. Feingold reflected on the support he has been given by his wife Sheryl, the decades spent perfecting and teaching microsurgical breast reconstruction and improving insurance access, the special psychological needs of mastectomy patients and the humanism incorporated in NYBRA's unique Patient Empowerment Program.





Patient Safety Comes First

By The NYBRA Team

Dr. Randall Feingold was a featured speaker at this year's American Society of Plastic Surgeons Patient Safety Committee meeting with The Doctors Company, the largest provider of Professional Liability Insurance to plastic surgeons in the U.S., held on July 26, 2024, in Napa, CA. This annual intensive one-day seminar brings together leaders from the ASPS and TDC to share the most current information of importance related to patient safety.

Dr Feingold presented his topic: **Best Practices in Breast Implant Surveillance: Helping Patients Identify and Manage Implant-Related Complications.** Dr. Feingold began by describing his 31-year history in breast implant surgery, both reconstructive and cosmetic, and noted the increasing trend toward explantation in recent years. He reviewed the improved collaboration of patient advocacy groups, the FDA and the ASPS in producing guidelines of shared responsibilities between patients and plastic surgeons to improve surveillance, identify complications and minimize risks.

After a hard day's work, all enjoyed a lovely evening at the Inglenook Vineyard!



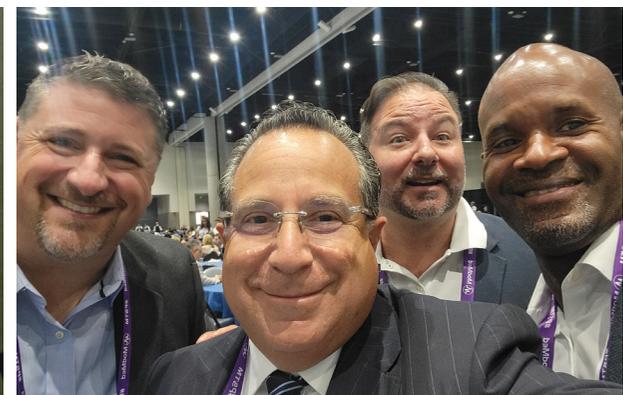
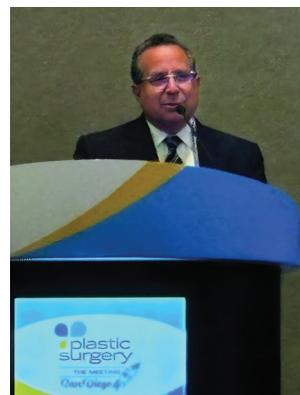
Teaching DIEP Flaps at the 2024 American Society of Plastic Surgeons Meeting

By Randall S. Feingold, M.D.

NYBRA is one of the nation's leaders in delivering microsurgical breast reconstruction. Over the decades, we have overcome many hurdles in educating the public and referring breast surgeons, gaining hospital acceptance, establishing operating room and postoperative monitoring infrastructure, and navigating insurance obstacles.

I was honored to be invited to speak on a panel titled **One of These Is Not Like the Other: Free Flaps in Academics and Private Practice** at the American Society of Plastic Surgeons meeting in San Diego, CA, in September 2024. The panel, moderated by Dr. David Greenspun from Connecticut, also featured Dr. Nabil Habash from Texas, Dr. Olivia Ho from the Mayo Clinic, and Dr. George Kokosis from Rush University. Plastic surgeons and residents from across the country attended to learn how NYBRA excels in operating times, length of stay, successful outcomes, and insurance management.

We also had the opportunity to reconnect with our past microsurgery fellows Derek Cody, MD and Brice McKane, MD!



PINK ROCKS BROADWAY!

By The NYBRA Team

PINKAID is one of the great local organizations that NYBRA is proud to support each year. Their mission is to help underserved breast cancer patients survive treatment with support and dignity, to provide screening and financial assistance to those in need, and to empower breast cancer survivors to heal by helping and inspiring others. This year they held their fundraising Evening of Compassion called **PINK ROCKS BROADWAY** on October 9, 2024, at the Paramount in Huntington, NY. In attendance to see performances by singer Taylor Dayne and Broadway's *Rock of Ages* were Dr. Jonathan Bank, Dr. Randall Feingold and Dr. David Light. The highlight of the night came when breast cancer survivors took to the stage to walk in the Celebration of Life Fashion Show including one of Dr. Feingold's patients!



Education by Virtual Presentations

By The NYBRA Team

Teaching and sharing information happens in many formats. Virtual presentations allow communication with large groups of physicians and surgeons around the country and the world from the desktop. Dr. Feingold gave 2 such presentations.

My 30 Year Experience with Explant, Explained was presented at the 3rd International Breast Implant Health Symposium on November 2nd and 3rd, 2024. This event brought together physicians, scientists, leadership from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to review data on the management of breast implant symptoms and complications.

Transformative Results in Post-Mastectomy Breast Reconstruction was presented at the Catholic Health Services Surgical Grand Rounds on November 20, 2024. This was the 3rd lecture in a new series directed at educating surgical residents throughout the Catholic Health System. Topics included the history and evolution of mastectomy and breast reconstruction, overcoming challenges in prosthetic reconstruction and the emergence of microsurgery to achieve restorative and sensate results.



Transitions: Special Announcement from Mollie Sugarman

By Mollie Sugarman, Clinical Director of the Patient Empowerment Program

After much contemplation, I have decided to transition into the next chapter of my life. Effective 1 January 2025, I officially retire from my role as Clinical Director of the Patient Empowerment Program at NYBRA.

It has been an extraordinary sixteen years since the inception of this integrative program, and I am immensely proud of the pioneering strides we have made together. NYBRA has been and continues to be the sole private practice in the U.S. that offers such a comprehensive model to our patients. We have indeed been trailblazers in our field. It also signifies the culmination of a fulfilling fifty-six-year professional career in this field. (For those of you doing the math, I started at age 2). Though this decision weighs heavy on my heart, I am grateful and ready for what lies ahead and ready to embrace it.

As I reflect on our incredible journey, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude and warmth. The creation and evolution of this program and the privilege of working with each of you have been among the most rewarding experiences of my professional and personal life. Your trust and collaboration have been pivotal to the success of our program, and I am deeply moved by the opportunity to have been a part of your journey.

I am thankful for the opportunity to empower NYBRA patients and take pride in our program's significant impact on our patients, their partners, and the practice. As you continue forward, I urge you to draw upon the tools and insights you have gained and remember the resilience, patience, and strength within each of you.

Our esteemed founding partners, Dr. Randall Feingold and Dr. Ron Israeli,

embraced the creation of this program. Their exceptional microsurgical prowess, coupled with their profound sensitivity to the needs of our patients, laid the foundation for this remarkable program. I extend my deepest gratitude to them and to the other partners, Drs. Peter Korn, David Light, and Jonathan Bank, for their unwavering commitment, support, and recognition of the emotional dimensions of our patients' journeys. Collaborating with these five exceptional physicians has been an honor.

Each of you holds a special place in my heart, and I will forever cherish the relationships and shared memories we have cultivated. I am profoundly grateful for the gifts you have bestowed upon me, and I extend my heartfelt thanks to each one of you. May the future be filled with an abundance of good health, joy, and moments of wonder and awe.

P.S. Let us remember the fundamental “Mollie-isms”:

- a. What do I know to be true at this moment?
- b. Self-care is not self-indulgence.
- c. One moves forward from this experience, rather than moving on; it becomes part of the fiber of your story.
- d. Remember to use the trauma of diagnosis as an opportunity for personal growth.



Welcoming Dr. Celeste Rivera: New Clinical Director of the Patient Empowerment Program

By The NYBRA Team

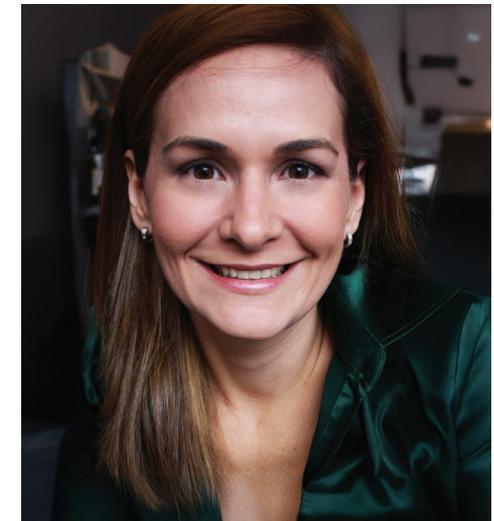
Dr. Celeste Rivera is an accomplished clinical psychologist and board-certified executive coach with over two decades of experience helping individuals in her private practice. Known for her warm and empathetic style, her expertise spans psychotherapy, executive coaching, and workshop facilitation.

In her role as the Clinical Director of the Patient Empowerment Program she will bring her deep clinical insight and her integrative approach to care to help our patients reconnect with their inner strength, manage the psychological impact of medical treatments, and navigate the changes that the diagnosis of cancer has brought to their lives. Deeply attuned to the complexities of survivorship, Dr. Rivera's approach integrates evidence-based therapeutic techniques with a profound understanding of the resilience needed to thrive beyond diagnosis and treatment.

Born and raised in the Caribbean, Dr. Rivera earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Puerto Rico. Her clinical training brought her to New York City where she completed her Clinical Internship at NYU Medical Center/Bellevue Hospital Clinical Internship Program, more than 20 years ago. After her graduation, she held clinical positions

at NYU Medical Center and Bellevue Hospital where she was also Clinical Supervisor and Instructor before moving to her private practice. She has honed her skills across diverse settings, addressing a wide range of psychological needs, which uniquely positions her to support individuals coping with the complexities of survivorship. Dr. Rivera is also a dynamic speaker and facilitator. She has taught and facilitated workshops on the themes of holistic health, wellness, stress management and resilience.

Dr. Rivera is honored to be joining NYBRA and is looking forward to supporting our patients as they navigate the emotional and psychological challenges of their journey as well as helping them find strength, balance, and wellness in their lives.





**JOIN US FOR OUR
INAUGURAL GALA FUNDRAISER**
AN EVENING CELEBRATING PATIENT EMPOWERMENT
TO IMPROVE BREAST RECONSTRUCTION OUTCOMES

The Uplifting Event

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2025
6:00 TO 10:00PM
CREST HOLLOW COUNTRY CLUB, WOODBURY, NEW YORK

**HONORING
MOLLIE
SUGARMAN**

FOR HER
PIONEERING WORK
IN PATIENT ADVOCACY
AND SUPPORT

FEATURING

COCKTAIL HOUR
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
FASHION SHOW
SITDOWN DINNER
SPECIAL SURPRISE
LIVE AND SILENT AUCTION

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT BREASTRECONSTRUCTION.ORG

Mollie Sugarman to be Honored at The Uplifting Event

By The NYBRA Team

We are proud to announce that Mollie Sugarman, NYBRA's Patient Empowerment Program Clinical Director, was selected as the honoree for The Uplifting Event on May 8th at Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury, New York.

The Uplifting Event is the BreastReconstruction.org inaugural fundraising gala, bringing together supporters, survivors, thrivers, previvors, and the communities that surround them to champion the importance of breast reconstruction advocacy and access. The event features a cocktail hour, silent auction, fashion show, sit-down dinner, and a special surprise performance.

Join us for an evening of connection and celebration in recognition of Mollie's contributions to our Patient Empowerment Program. We look forward to supporting Breastreconstruction.org and its mission to improve breast reconstruction outcomes for people from every background, at every stage by empowering them with the tools and resources they need to make informed breast reconstruction choices.



Scan the QR code to reserve your seat today.

Marnie Rustemeyer featured on the Her Take series on @LifetimeTV

By The NYBRA Team

We are proud that Marnie Rustemeyer, our talented Restorative Tattoo Artist, was featured on the Her Take series on @LifetimeTV! In this video, Marnie shares her passion for helping individuals regain what was lost due to cancer. She describes her work as both a medical and restorative process, aiming to make tattoos look as realistic as possible to aid in the patient's healing and emotional recovery. Marnie recalls her first tattoo procedure during training, where she felt nervous due to the emotional journey her patients had already gone through. Despite the nerves, the experience was transformative, as the patient was overjoyed when they saw the final result. "It was a fantastic day sharing my experience as a Previvor and Restorative Tattoo Artist. I am so grateful to share my story and essential work—it's about empowering a community and showing what's possible when passion meets purpose," Marnie said. The Her Take series on Lifetime is a collection of short videos that feature interviews and DIY projects, and we are thrilled to see Marnie's impactful story featured in this inspiring series.



*Scan QR Code
to watch video.*



Holding Space for a Partner's Needs When a Couple Confronts Breast Cancer

By Mollie Sugarman, Clinical Director of the Patient Empowerment Program

Breast cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatment impact both patients and their partners. Unfortunately, the latter are often overlooked in this process, despite the fact that tending to their needs benefits both the individual and the couple. Even the most communicative pairs often feel uncomfortable or uncertain when it comes to openly sharing their feelings about this experience. That is why NYBRA's Patient Empowerment Program has created a safe, confidential environment for partners to come together, share their experiences with one another, and express their concerns in the Men's Breakfast Meeting.

The Men's Breakfast Meeting is a monthly virtual group for spouses and partners. This meeting gives them a space to speak openly, voice concerns, and learn from one another. Men are encouraged to engage long-term, as "veterans" (participants whose partners were diagnosed eight or more years ago) inspire "newbies" and share wisdom. This lively community frequently connects outside the group for sustained support.

As a medical team, we are committed to supporting partners as they learn how to listen to their mate's feelings and fears, understand the various treatments, and discuss their level of involvement in the care surrounding the illness. I work with couples to help them reframe this challenging and often devastating experience as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship and reassess priorities. In that work, it is essential to address both the physical and emotional needs of the couple. Men require support during this journey to cope with their feelings.

These feelings may include fear of losing their partner, issues related to the change in their partner's body, concerns about hurting their partner during intimate contact, and questions about how this diagnosis will impact their relationship long-term.

If you are a partner, significant other, or spouse, take advantage of this unique opportunity to gain valuable insights! Even if you can only join us for part of the meeting, we highly recommend dropping in. Participants rave about the impact this group has had on their lives.

Read on for reflections that come directly from attendees.

"The men's breakfast is so very important for many reasons. It is a judgment-free zone for men to express their concerns and fears while fostering conversation and support for one another. The 'veterans' share their experience from their journey and gain so much insight from those that are going through treatment now. Once the meeting ends it gives moments of self-reflection, hope, and renewed inspiration to want to pay it forward to those on their journey.

This journey is one of the most difficult experiences a married couple will go through in their life. Mental healing begins post trauma and treatment, on the days when the phone stops and friends/family are busy living their lives. The men's breakfast is one of many things that help toward the healing and rebuilding process. Mollie is truly a blessing for her hard work and dedication in the healing and living aspect of this journey." —John Mannara

Patient Empowerment

“The Men’s Breakfast Meeting is a unique opportunity to converse with other men sharing a common experience. It is an outlet to openly express myself, while absorbing the concerns, suggestions, solutions, and wisdom of others. We are simply fortunate to be guided by an amazing moderator, who has an immense experience, outstanding insight, and the most understanding, friendly, delicate personal approach. Looking forward to the monthly meeting, I’m continually reminded to keep the world around me in perspective.

The meetings establish the recognition that here is a point in life where we, as spouses, are most needed—unequivocally more than anybody else. It’s as simple as that. It is always encouraging to see so many men drop their ego in support of the one who, some time ago, agreed to marry them. By interacting with Mollie and the guys, we learn to adapt to a challenging, possibly unintelligible, reality. We are gradually gaining the fortitude to keep moving forward. For people who are not used to talking about medical or personal matters, the group exposure is a newly found source of strength building, showing that there is a post-traumatic growth. It is gratifying to be able to give some advice to people who are about to embark on this journey.”—Ben Kadishon

“I find the Men’s Breakfast Meetings to be a way of giving back for the insights and perspectives I have learned through my wife’s nine year breast cancer journey. It is a scary journey, full of uncertainties and questions. Having been through this experience, I’m grateful for the help

and support we’ve received so it’s only natural to give back by trying to support others embarking on the journey.

As a ‘veteran,’ I’ve learned a lot (and continue to learn and/or refresh my learning) about how to be an active listener, how to understand my wife’s internal struggles, and how to be the best support mechanism I can be.

In reality for me, attending the meetings is a lot more than “giving back.” It’s a refreshing remembrance of all that I’ve learned about myself and my wife from this process. While cancer is in our ‘rearview mirror,’ we have reevaluated our priorities and look forward to a robust future.”—A. D.



The Art of Listening

By Mollie Sugarman, Clinical Director of the Patient Empowerment Program

One of the most common topics my Men's Breakfast Meeting addresses is the importance of listening. Listening plays such a critical role in relationships that one frequent group participant—who was obviously attentively listening—suggested I write about it for the blog. (Thanks, Ben!) This topic arises so often that I was easily convinced to take up the task.

The Men's Breakfast Meeting addresses the needs of spouses/partners and helps them navigate the best ways to be available to their significant others as they traverse the challenging road of a cancer diagnosis. As many of you know, this group is one of the highlights of my month. I am continuously moved by the sensitivity, generosity, and kindness the men show to one another. Their commitment to continue to pay it forward many years beyond their partner's diagnosis is unparalleled.

Men in the group frequently express a sense of helplessness. That frustration is often followed by an instinct to try to “fix it” that may overshadow their concern for their partner's well-being and the threat and fear of potential loss. This type of dynamic can challenge a healthy, stable relationship. When you add a cancer diagnosis to the situation, it becomes even more difficult to manage.

Many years ago, one of the participants in this group shared that what he learned most from this experience was to “shut up and listen” and that the act of doing so was perhaps among the

greatest gifts he could offer his wife. He infused the practice into their relationship as a whole, and it significantly improved their connection. She felt heard.

The author and educator Stephen R. Covey conveyed this beautifully:

“Active listening is a skill that everyone doesn't practice. When someone asks you to listen, you should listen with all your heart and mind, not to reply, not to give advice (unless they ask you to), not to give your own opinion, and not to wander off, just to listen because that is all they want from you.

It is unknown how much it means to them when you just sincerely listen. You never know how your one divided attention through listening can help someone to the extent that it can lessen their burden.”

We tend to forget the impact of active listening. Whether we're dealing with a spouse, partner, or close friend, most of us think we need to “do something” in order to be active or helpful. Indeed, the “Art of Listening” is an active process. It's about being present, which is priceless. It does not require a response or the need to provide a solution. Instead, it provides a safe space where the other person feels heard without judgment. The listener does not need to understand the feelings the speaker expresses but

Patient Empowerment

instead recognize that the other person is in distress. The actual words/ thoughts may not be rational, but it is critical to understand the intensity of the emotions behind them. Preston Cameron published a reflection on this notion: “The active listener avoids getting stuck in another person’s feelings.”

Listening can benefit both your personal and professional relationships. Listening is not a skill that most of us are taught; it is a skill that is acquired. It assists in building trust with someone. It reinforces relationships. And when you are supporting a loved one through breast reconstruction, feeling helpless, like there is nothing you can do, it just may be the best gift you receive.



“The act of listening was perhaps among the greatest gifts he could offer his wife. She felt heard.”





“On May 18, I was thrilled to receive an award from The Guardian Brain Foundation's "Hats Off to Women," established by Mary Pallotta, in recognition of my innovative approach and dedication to addressing the psycho-social aspects of breast cancer in both men and women. I often find myself overwhelmed by the sense of "wonder" and fulfillment I experience from creating supportive environments filled with inspiring, insightful, accepting, evolving, and hopeful women who are constantly surprised by the strength they draw from within to deal with life's challenges.

I am sincerely grateful to Mary, who has committed herself to addressing the needs of individuals coping with glioblastoma and traumatic brain injury for 22 years.

My thanks to NYBRA Plastic Surgery and family members who provided sponsorship.”

-Mollie Sugarman

Be Informed Lecture Series

By The NYBRA Team

The Be Informed Lecture Series is a key part of NYBRA's dedication to patient education and empowerment. This monthly program features leading health and wellness experts who share insights and resources tailored for those navigating a cancer diagnosis, recovery, or breast reconstruction. Designed to answer pressing questions and provide essential guidance, these free, pro bono sessions empower patients with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their care and well-being.

Recent lectures included:

- Rebecca Bloom, Esq. on When women get sick: Helping to Navigate the health space and the workplace
- Moran Cohen on IV Treatments for Restoration and Health Maintenance
- Dana Donofree, Abby Match, and Donna Bacon with Dr. Ron Israeli and Mollie Sugarman on Post Traumatic Growth: Inspiring Stories of Three Thrivers
- Mary Gravina, LCSW-R on How to share your diagnosis with children
- MaryAnn Jones, BC, TWC on Understanding Nutrition Basics and the surprising way they will improve your life
- Jonathan Herman, MD on Latest Updates on hereditary connection to breast and ovarian cancers
- Yelda Nouri, MD on Biomarker Testing in Breast Cancer: What does it mean to you?
- Diane Raspoanti, LMT on Lymphedema: What you need to know
- Nancy Scherlong, LCSW, PTR, CJJ, M/S on Wellness Metaphors: Writing to boost resilience and lower stress
- Jonas Sokolof, DO on Unlocking Wellness: The power of Oncological Rehabilitation



Mollie Sugarman



Donna Bacon



Kylie Bensley, MS, RD



Rebecca Bloom



Moran Cohen



Dana Donofree



Mary Gravina, LCSW



Jonathan Herman, MD



MaryAnn Jones, NBC-HWC



Abby Match



Yelda Nouri, MD



Diane Raspanti, LMT



Nancy Scherlong, LCSW



Jonas Sokolof, MD

Patient Testimonials: Empowerment, Clarity, and Support

The Be Informed Lecture Series is an Invaluable resource for us.

There's so much to learn after a diagnosis and having expert advice is so grounding. Thank you!

So very grateful for all the components the Patient Empowerment Program provides; It shines light in the darkness.

Thank you for this incredible series; It's helped me to make more informed decisions.

So grateful for the Be Informed Lecture Series. I had no idea of what essential information I needed to know. It helped me take more charge of my life.

Bravo and much gratitude to all the specialists who participate in this series!



Year in Review

Our Numbers Speak Volumes

\$2.1+ Million

raised for the American
Cancer since 2001

Thousands

of hours of community support,
educational efforts, and social
media outreach in 2024

Top Fundraisers

raising tens of thousands
to support Making Strides Against
Breast Cancer in 2024

500+

unique zip codes
for our patients

773

cosmetic surgical procedures in
the office operating room in 2024

70+

virtual support group sessions
and lectures in 2024

639

microvascular free flap
breast reconstructions in 2024

733

breast implant
reconstructions in 2024

1,287

breast revision
reconstructions in 2024





NYBRA

PLASTIC SURGERY

833 Northern Blvd, Suite 160 | Great Neck, NY 11021 | (516) 498-8400 | NYBRA.COM