

What's so funny about breast cancer?



I'll never forget that day on the school bus in grade 6 when a cute boy looked at my flat, undeveloped chest and announced in a loud voice that he had a joke that'll "knock your tits off but I see you've already heard it before!" Needless to say I was totally humiliated and angry at the little jerk but how was I to know that years later I would rethink his comment as (possibly) the world's 1st mastectomy joke?

Years later, at the age of 33, there wasn't a lot I found funny about the bilateral breast cancer that had spread to my lymph nodes and required 2 mastectomies, many rounds of chemotherapy, radiation and multiple surgeries. But when I found myself at the cancer clinic waiting for 1 of my chemo treatments and looked down at my flat-again chest, I couldn't help but laugh at the irony of the situation.

Aside from developing a penchant for completely inappropriate humour, my cancer experience woke me up to my life and my calling. More years later, after the scars had healed and it slowly dawned on me that I might have a future (touch wood), I decided to get the heck out of the corporate world and return to doing what I loved best, helping others in a personal and meaningful way versus a shuffling-paper- really-quickly kind of way.

That's what prompted me to start carrying school books again and as I approached the completion of my master's degree in Counselling Psychology, I discovered the [Booby Innovation Grant](#) offered by [Rethink Breast Cancer](#). I was stoked to have an opportunity to bring my professional and personal experiences together and drafted a proposal for an employment counselling program to help young women navigate the limbo-land between breast cancer treatments and the world of work.

Well, I was lucky enough to be awarded the B.I.G. grant and the funding has enabled me to develop [cedars](#), an employment counselling program for young women with breast cancer. Along with my personal experience of the challenges of returning to work after breast cancer, I draw on my current professional experiences working in anxiety & depression counselling, and past experiences as a human resources & recruitment specialist, and employment counsellor.

At no cost, young women with breast cancer in Canada can enroll in the program and receive up to 10 hours of individualized support that can be tailored to meet their unique needs. Assistance can include, for example, help in preparing for difficult or illegal interview questions, assistance with developing resumes and cover letters, learning how to tap into the hidden job market, exploring various career options, etc.

To enroll or for more information, check out the [cedars program](#). Do you know a young woman who might benefit from this program? Feel free to pass along Lina's contact information:

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Lina Crossin rcc,ccc
www.soleilcounselling.ca

lina-in-vancouver (skype)
lina@soleilcounselling.ca
604-790-3344 (cell)