



# Caring for the Caregiver: It's a Marathon ... Not a Sprint

Presented by YOUR NAME





# Who is a “Caregiver” ???

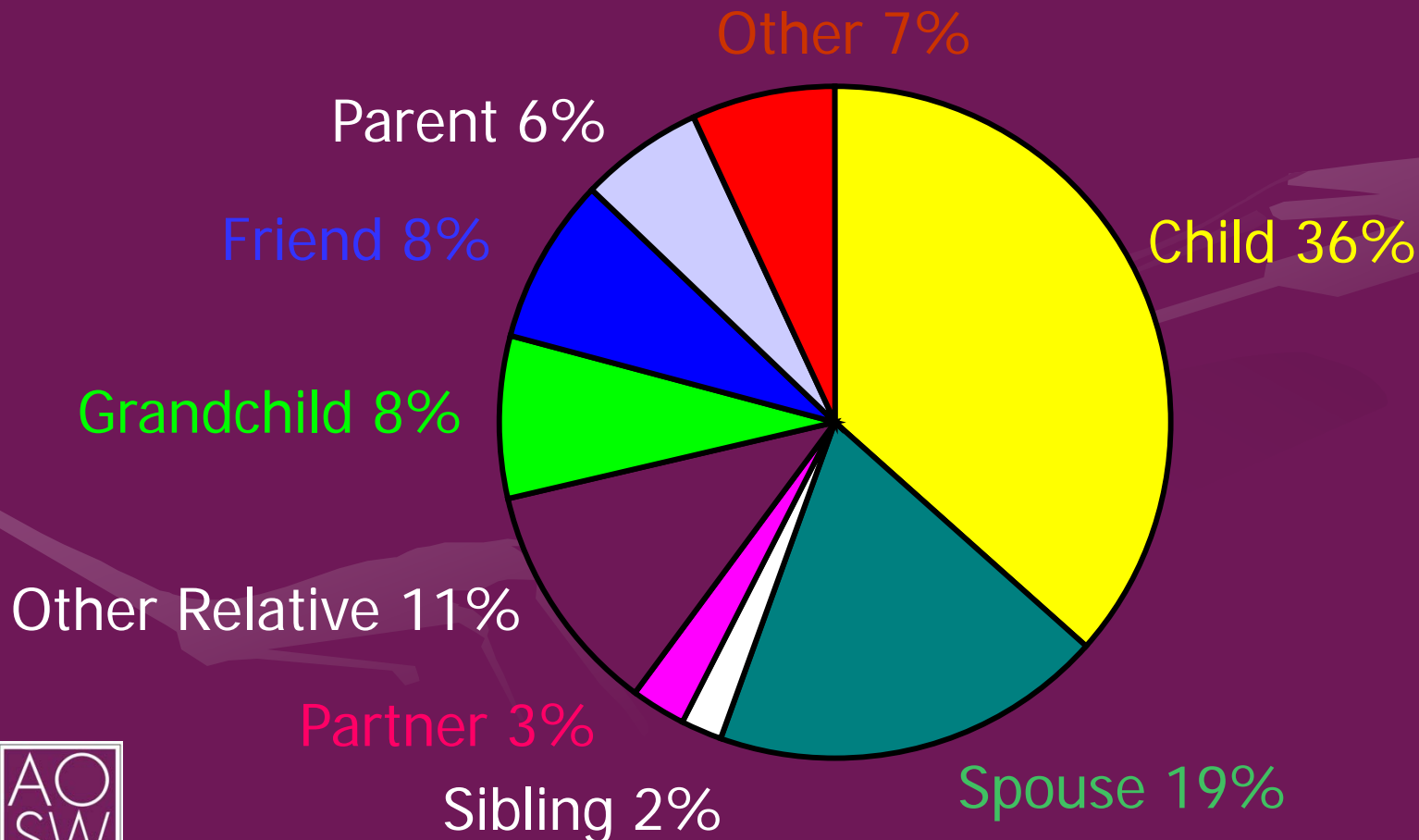
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- “Anyone who provides physical, emotional, spiritual, financial or logistical support to a loved one with a chronic, disabling or life-threatening illness.”

The Wellness Community, 2009, p. 3

# Who are America's Caregivers?



*A Portrait of Informal Caregivers in America, 2001.*

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# Why is this important?

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- Caregivers providing support to a spouse who report strain from doing so are 63% more likely to die within 4 years than others their age.

Schultz and Beach, 1999

- Partners of women with breast cancer (predominantly husbands, but also “significant others,” daughters, friends, and others) find that partners’ mental health correlates positively with the anxiety, depression, fatigue, and symptom distress of women with breast cancer and that the effects are bidirectional.

Segrin et al., 2005, 2007

# How Are Caregivers Affected?

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High levels of psychological burden in:

- Feelings of helplessness/loss of control
- Feelings of unwanted aloneness
- Having to make decisions for the patient
- Being expected to provide encouragement and companionship



**Caring for the Caregivers**, Myra Glajchen, DSW and Lisa Fraidin, MA.

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# How Are Caregivers Affected?

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But WAIT! There's more!

- Deeper connection with loved one
- Better communication
- Clearer priorities
- Stronger commitment
- Increased sense of self



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**“I love my wife as much or more than when we were first married. She’s still the same wonderful, sensitive and caring life partner she’s always been. She’s still so special and attractive to me. The superficial changes that cancer has caused don’t matter. This wasn’t the first challenge we’ve faced and it won’t be the last, but we’ll try to take them in stride, grow from the insights obtained, and continue to share many more years together as best friends.”**

~Steve, colon cancer survivor and caregiver for wife Lynn who is a multiple myeloma survivor



# Two Major Tasks of Caregiving

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- Taking care of your loved ones – the person in your life with cancer and others
- Taking care of YOURSELF



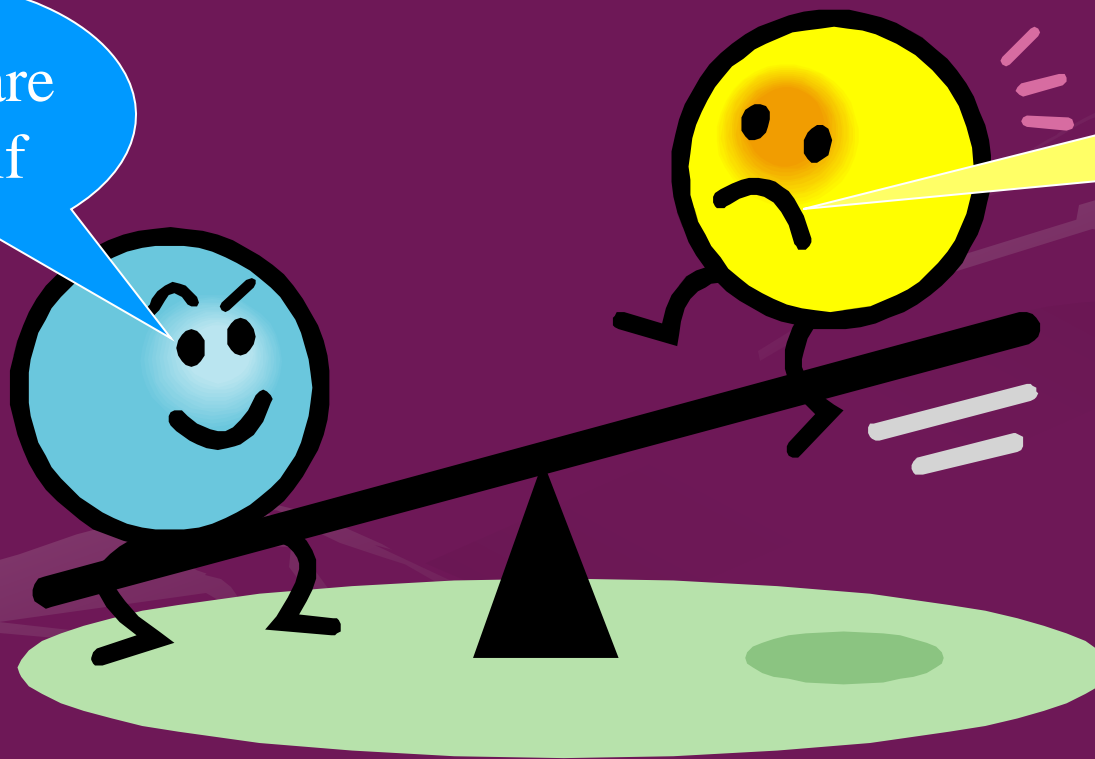
# Models for Caregiving

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Taking Care  
of Yourself

Taking Care  
of Others

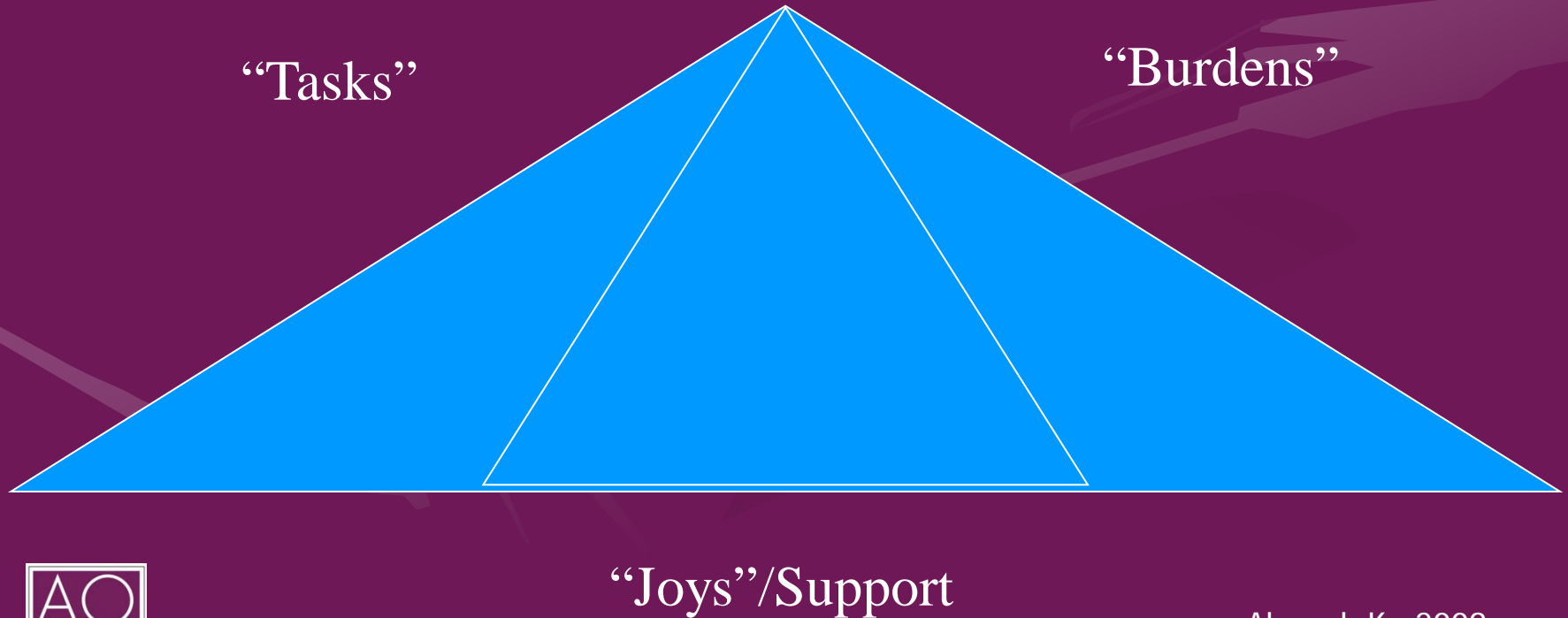




# Models for Caregiving

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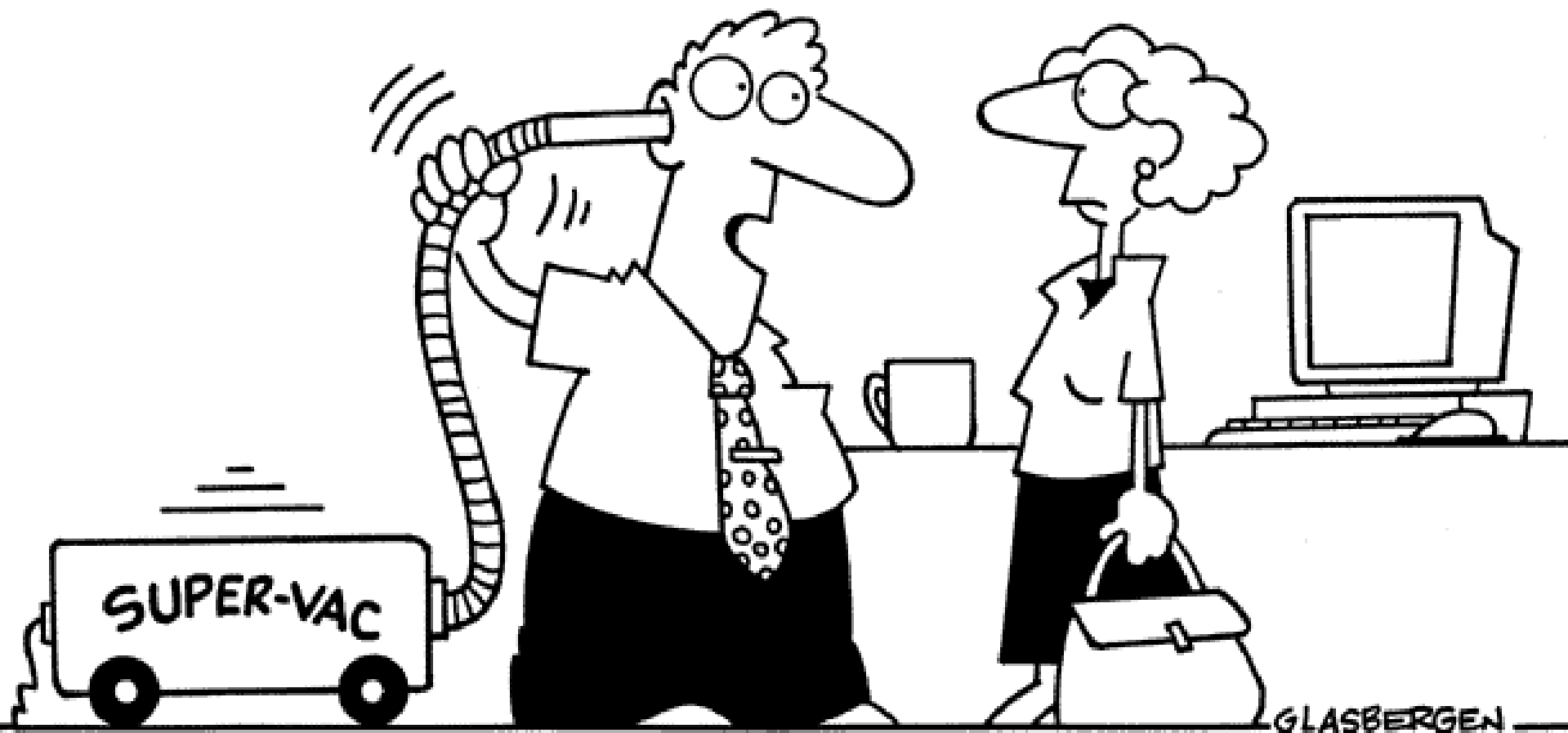
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# So How Do We Do This?



**"It's just something I do every day at 5:00  
to get rid of stress before I go home."**

# The ABC's of Caregiving

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A. Awareness

B. Balance

C. Connection



# Awareness

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- YOU are a caregiver, and that brings a new set of demands and opportunities
- What are you feeling?
  - It's a marathon, not a sprint – you and your loved one are in this for the long haul
  - Develop (and get used to) the “New Normal”



*"I'm really behind on all my living."*



# Balance

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"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself first."

~Ralph Waldo Emerson





# Self Care Strategies

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- **Physical**
  - Sleep well
  - Eat well
  - Stretch
  - Exercise
- **Emotional**
  - Friends
  - Cry
  - Laugh
  - Gratitude lists
  - HUMOR
- **Psychological**
  - Self-reflect
  - Pleasure reading
  - Say “NO”
  - Smile/Laugh
  - Solitude
- **Workplace**
  - Enjoy the break
  - Set limits
  - Peer support
  - Take vacations



# Things to Consider

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- How can you help maintain the stability of home and family?
- How can you help ensure family income is maintained
- Who else can assist and how?
- Can you manage the physical care needed?
- What will help you tolerate the “medicalization” of your home?



# Ways to Cope When Feeling Overwhelmed

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- Increase social support even more
- Maintain task focused behaviors
- Increase emotional distancing
- Manage emotions through cognitive self talk
- Feel better using altruism / Get out of yourself

# PRESCRIPTION AIR FRESHENERS



A no-nonsense fresher  
that takes care of  
just about any problem.

Light yet effective :  
perfect for  
everyday use.

When you don't want  
to foul around, reach  
for the Meadow.

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# Connection

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“When we get too caught up in the busyness of the world, we lose connection with one another - and ourselves.”

~Jack Kornfield





# Being a Guy

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- Men (often) focus on fixing problems
- Guys are less likely to show emotion
- Women (usually) appreciate problem-solving
- Don't feel valued without emotional  
CONNECTION

# Strategies for Connection

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- Be responsive to your loved one
  - What does he or she actually WANT?
- Have a list of tasks you can offer when people say “How can I help?” or “What can I do?”
  - Lotsahelpinghands.org; mylifeline.org
- Think of playing on a team rather than trying to be a one person show



# What Makes Caregivers Effective?

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- Healing power of human “presence”
- Empathy-for self and others
- Respect
- Authenticity
- Flexibility
- Mutual Participation
- Directiveness, Control, Responsibility



# What's Less Likely to Work...

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- Trying to do it all
- Pretending nothing has changed
- Distancing
- Not allowing room for your feelings –
  - Your partner usually worries as much about you as you worry about them

# The Hard Conversations



*"Your need to have a conversation about our problems  
is interfering with my need to pretend they don't exist."*

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# The Take-Home

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- Your loved one needs you
- You can't do this alone
- Together, you can and will, get through

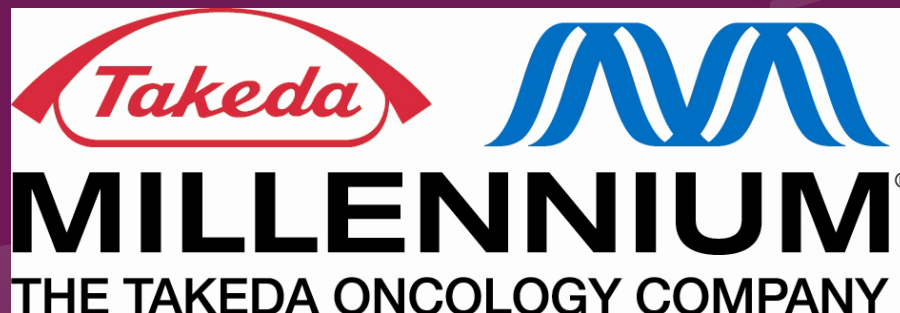


# THANK YOU!

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**YOUR NAME**

**Association of Oncology Social Work**

**100 N. 20th Street, 4th Floor**

**Philadelphia, PA 19103**

**p: 215.599.6093**

**e: info@aosw.org**

**www.aosw.org**

