

Arise2Live Perspectives

Resilience in the Midst of Survivorship

Four Key Relational Roles in Treatment and Survivorship

by Scott R. Weaver

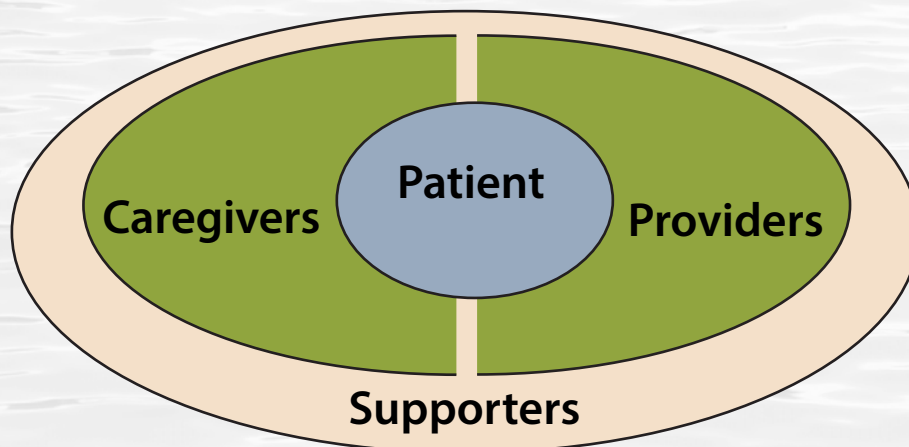
This article is a starting line to four important roles in treatment and survivorship. The four roles are the patient, the providers, the caregivers, and the surrounding supporters. These roles and the relationships between them quickly grow unique and complex for each situation. Yet, the basic four roles remain common.

After my sudden medical adversity, I felt like I had landed in an strange, unfamiliar world. Everything seemed upside down, emotions were running high, and the mad dash to do something. One surprises of discovering survivorship was that people came out of the woodwork. Family, doctors, nurses, friends, church folk, and more appeared out of nowhere. Or it seemed that way. For me, it was nearly impossible to grasp the big picture of how all those people could help the situation.

Looking back, I wish I had better understood the four relational roles. I kind of knew beforehand, but not really. I made a lot of assumptions and sometimes was just plain ignorant of how people could help. Fortunately, most people were gracious and understanding in my journey.

Here is a brief description of the four roles. Please remember, real people carry these roles, some of them may be family and close friends.

The Patient - The most important role because, well, that's the person people focus on. A patient's primary job is to get well. The patient accomplishes this by allowing the providers and caregivers to do their job. And to take care of themselves to the best they can, which includes maintaining a positive attitude...at least most of the time.





The Providers - Usually doctors and nurses. They provide the medical knowledge, solutions, and skills, along with key medicines. They focus on the “problem” and too often the “problem” requires their total attention. Which means the Providers direct little, if any, attention to the personal needs of the patient. To them, saving the patient’s life is much more important than bedside manners.

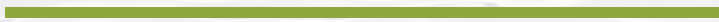
Caregivers - A precious and difficult role, one that is usually under appreciated whether paid professional or the “informal” family caregiver at home. They often make sure the provider’s instructions are carried out and create an environment where the patient can heal. This requires tremendous effort, energy, and support.

Supporters - Anyone else who cares, from family and close friends all the way to people donating to medical research. While each has varying levels of “caring,” they all function as “Gap Fillers” for tasks that the providers, patient, or caregivers cannot handle or do. Supporters can see past the urgency of a medical adversity to see what other important things need to be done. Supporters truly want to help, but need guidance. So...they should to be told (or trained).

All these four roles are important to healing and survivorship. Remember, these roles are real people and they are all important. In the real world, it often falls to the patient and the caregivers to “manage” the relationships, even when they feel overwhelmed. This management needs to be done with honesty and tack. There are many, many ways to accomplish this well.

The first step in managing the relationships is knowing these four roles exist, and each one does different things. Ultimately, they help the patient and caregiver get through the journey of surviving a medical adversity. Let them help you arise to live.

Oh yeah, don’t forget to say thank you to the people around you.



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Sept. 2024