

*Native Hawaiian Breast Cancer Survivors  
"Talking Story"*

# The 'Ohana's Role in Supporting Loved Ones with Breast Cancer



This booklet is dedicated to Daveanna “Steady” Kaowili (1951-2000) and Beatrice Rosa (1928-2001); Your courage and activism in the area of breast cancer prevention education has inspired us. This booklet is dedicated to you and to your ‘ohana.



Mahalo piha to our Native Hawaiian breast cancer survivors and their ‘ohana. May their stories encourage us to care for and value our loved ones, and ourselves just as much as we care for and value our ‘ohana.

Gloriann Akau, & Kai Lewis  
(daughter), Hawai‘i

Karen Joao & Hazel Kaakimaka  
(sister), Moloka‘i

Gwendolyn Pua Borerro & Earl  
Nakoa (significant other), Lāna‘i

Susan Kahawai, Henrietta “Iwi”,  
Nancy, & Vanessa Kahawai,  
Delphine Rabanes, Karen Noa  
(sisters), Trisha Noa (niece),  
O‘ahu

Abigail H. L. Burgess, Moloka‘i

Leni Hokoana English, Glen  
(husband), Maka‘io (son),  
Manalani (daughter), & Juanita  
“Queenie” Hokoana (mother),  
Maui

Daveanna M. “Steady” Kaowili,  
Aloha Planesi (auntie), Elisia  
Valentine (niece), Maui

Cindy Leimomi Goodness &  
Tammy Kaneshiro (friend), O‘ahu

J. Mahealani McClellan, O‘ahu

Beatrice H. Rosa, O‘ahu

Keikilani Harada & Wayne  
Harada (husband), Kaua‘i

Pele Hanoa & Keolalani Hanoa  
(daughter), Hawai‘i



*Produced by: Papa Ola Lōkahi, 894 Queen St. Honolulu, HI 96813.*

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*Mahalo to all for providing valuable input.*

When we heard Mama had cancer all we could do was our... traditional prayers. And... we would go to different places, power places for our family and sit and pray and ask [our ancestors for] help... And that's inspiration. But I think it comes from our firm cultural base, our belief in the spiritual world and our aumakuas that we are able to... cope with things like this or catastrophes without flipping out.

*Keolalani Hanoa, daughter of Pele Hanoa*



**Be there to help her out  
even if she says,  
"I don't need."**



I guess the way [Mom] talked, she didn't need anybody to come with her [to the doctor]. She just didn't want to say it. It's like Hawaiians when they say, "Oh you like eat?" You don't ask, you just make the plate and give it to them. Just make the time, just... do it.

*Kai Lewis, daughter of Gloriann Akau*

Whenever [Leni] asks, I'm always there. And this is how she would ask, "Oh mom, what's your schedule today?" You see, she doesn't want to [ask directly]... Anything she wants, I'm there.

*Juanita "Queenie" Hokoana,  
mother of Leni English*



## Being there for her can mean:

listening to her, making dinner for her and the kids, praying, using humor, taking her to special places...

[I did] a lot of listening. Cindy would tell me what the treatment was like, how she was feeling. She would... tell me about the process that she was going through.

*Tammy Kaneshiro,  
best friend of Cindy Goodness*



I changed her bandage, [and asked] “Mama what you ono for eat?”

You know in my Mom’s recovery, the best healing for her was coming back to the `āina.

*Keolalani Hanoa,  
daughter of Pele Hanoa*



[Karen] talks to a lot of people and shows them her operation [on her breast]. Sometimes I have to tell her to put her blouse down!

*Hazel Kaakimaka sister of Karen Joao*

We gave moral support. Prayer. I think that’s the most important for us. Spiritual support.

*Sisters of Susan Kahawai*



## Take Care of Your Mom!

Show mom you care and love her very much!

Well, when mom was preparing to go to the hospital, I called all my brothers and sisters and I wanted them to send me 10 of their favorite memories of mom... things that made them feel special by mom. So... all 7 of them sent, and I typed it up and put clip art on it and I made this book for her. It was like a bouquet from her children... so that she'd have a piece of everybody.

*Kauī Lewis, daughter of Gloriann Akau*



If she has no more breasts -  
You can get more closer for a hug.  
*Maka'io English, son of Leni English, age 15*

Maybe she has no  
more hair...

Maybe she has no  
more breasts...

But you can just  
show her how much  
you love her!

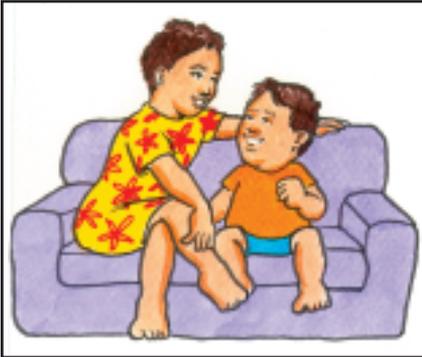
Give her a hug and  
make her feel special.



## What can you do to help mom?

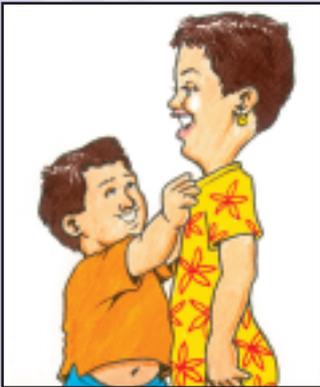
Talk to her about something like school, something besides what she has to think of.

*Manalani English, daughter of Leni English, age 12*



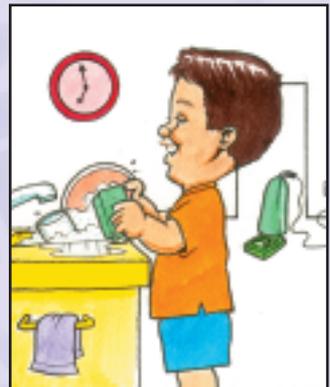
**Sitting by her,  
talking to her;**

**Helping her put  
on her bandages;**



**Helping her dress;**

**Helping with house work.**



## You can also help mom by doing things by yourself.

Put everything aside and support her. If you have to make snacks or bring refreshments after the game, Mom's not going to make it, you can make it yourself. Little stuff like this, just make sure mom doesn't have to do everything. Put her first.

*Maka`io English, son of Leni English, age 15*



**Making refreshments for  
the game by yourself;**



**Picking up  
after yourself;**



**Taking care of your  
brothers and sisters.**

## Take care of yourself too!



If it takes you to cry to feel better, then cry.  
*Manalani English, daughter of Leni English, age 12*



**Is there someone  
you can talk to?**

**Your friend  
Your sisters and brothers  
Your Auntie/Uncle  
Your `ohana (family)  
Your teacher...**

**Talk to someone about your mom's breast cancer.  
Tell them how you feel.**

## Talk-story: man to man -

You've got to be strong and be there to help your wife through breast cancer.



I would always go to the doctor with Keikilani and ask questions to the doctor... Sometimes I would leave her alone for one hour so she could cry

and think by herself.

*Wayne Harada, husband of Keikilani Harada*

Don't lose hope. Be positive and reassuring. Facing [breast cancer] together is easier than alone. Try to spend as much time together and go to the doctor with her. I also talked to her more.



*Glen English,  
husband of Leni English*

Stay with the lady. Put power on yourself and take what comes. Get strong with your partner; try [your] best to help. I went everywhere with her... I traveled [off island] with her for [the] operation. I cried when I heard she was sick. I needed patience to take care of her.



*Earl Nakoa,  
significant other of Gwen Borrero*

## Doing things lovingly is important.

We always smiled and kept our spirits up... We always found a reason to look forward to tomorrow... Our plan was that we weren't going to make [Steady] feel sick...we always smiled.

*Elisia Valentine,  
niece of Daveanna "Steady" Kaowili*

Just be there. Love them because you only have them in that moment in time. Cherish them and be there. Show them how you really feel about them.

Be there and don't let them give up.

*Aloha Planesi, Aunt of Daveanna  
"Steady" Kaowili*

At least once a month [my brothers and sisters] would spend time with [our Mom] so she knows we value her so much.

*Kaui Lewis,  
daughter of Gloriann Akau*

I think the thing that I would suggest the most is to do [things] lovingly. I think what happens is that people take things as a matter of fact. OK, so I made her breakfast, so I got her the newspaper and think nothing about it. But you got to do it with love. If I sat and talked to my daughter, she would sit and massage my feet, you know, you got to go the extra mile to [let someone know] they're wanted.

*Gloriann Akau, 3-year survivor*



## Remember to take care of yourself because you are important to her right now...

- Do things that support you, whether it be prayers or going to special places.
- Talk-story with people who have gone through this before. You may be surprised at how much you share with them.
- It's a challenging time for you. Talk to somebody.
- Understanding more about breast cancer might ease your mind if you ask questions of the health care provider during her check up.



We have the ocean to let it go. Water is healing... it helps you deal with your emotions - you know, wash away. Just sitting down, talking story and visiting special places...

*Keolalani Hanoa,  
daughter of Pele Hanoa*

...Take couple of deep breathes and then pray. [I] still had redness in the eyes from the crying but the rest of the body and mind felt better. It helped me out.

*Maka`io English, son of Leni English, age 15*



Also see these breast cancer booklets:

**After Diagnosis: Now What** and **Breast Health Care**

# Getting Support

It's important to get information on breast cancer so you know what's going on!

If you don't have a health care provider call the Native Hawaiian Health Care System for assistance and for additional breast cancer booklets in this series.

Kaua'i, Ni'ihau

Ho'ōla Lāhui Hawai'i

(808) 246-3511

O'ahu

Ke Ola Mamo

(808) 845-3388

Moloka'i

Nā Pu'uwai

(808) 560-3653

Lāna'i

Ke Ola Hou O Lāna'i

(808) 565-6608

Maui

Hui No Ke Ola Pono

(808) 244-4647

Hawai'i

Hui Mālama Ola Nā 'Ōiwi

(808) 969-9220

For up-to-date cancer information call or visit these web sites:

American Cancer Society

(800) 227-2345

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

Cancer Information Service

(800) 422-6237

[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

Susan G. Komen  
Breast Cancer Foundation

[www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org)

Cancer Care

[www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org)