

# Patient Profile

## Michele Gossett: *Stop, Breathe, and Be*

**W**hen Michele Gossett started to feel unwell, she immediately went to her doctors. Both her mother and sister died from ovarian cancer, and with a strong family history of cancer, she was worried. So, when her doctors said that they couldn't find anything wrong with her, that she was having menopausal symptoms, she insisted on having further scans. Just two weeks after graduating with a Masters in Nursing Anesthesiology from Drexel, Michele was diagnosed with stage III ovarian cancer that had metastasized throughout her body.

A friend – who is a breast cancer survivor and past patient – suggested that she see a specialist at the Abramson Cancer Center. Michele made the call on Friday, was seen on Monday, and was in surgery on Tuesday. Facing a challenging treatment regimen of surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy, and given the extent of her cancer, Michele realized that “this may be bigger than what I can handle.” Then she learned about Penn's Program for Stress Management, led by Michael Baime, M.D. Michele became a regular participant in the program and says, “the sessions have been life changing.”

Before beginning the program, Michele explains, “My whole focus used to be on cancer – I became my cancer. Now I realize I have the power within me to live and enjoy life.” She talks about how the program has allowed her to gain awareness of her thoughts, saying, “It's not that we never have sadness or emotions and feelings, but we are aware

and accept them as such. You explore the feelings and then let them go. Stop, breathe, and be.”

*“My whole focus used to be on cancer – I became my cancer. Now I realize I have the power within me to live and enjoy life.”*

*~ Michele Gossett*

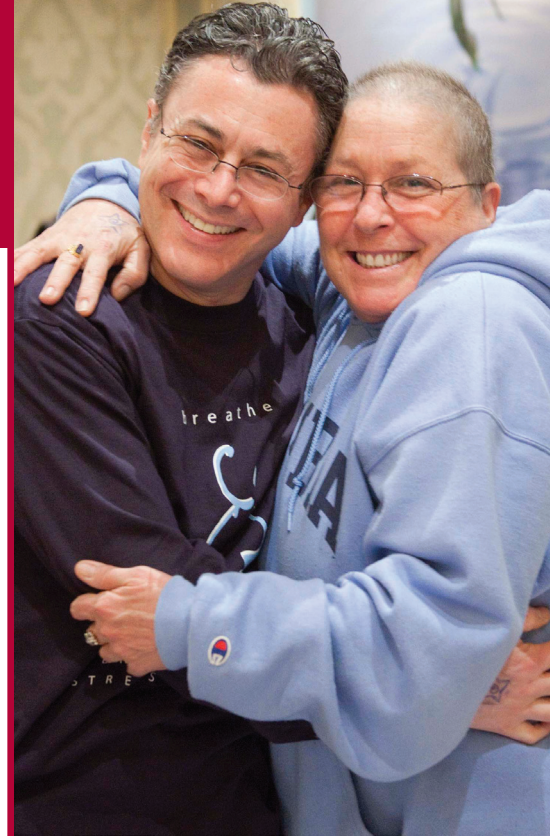
The program has helped Michele obtain a sense of peace in her life, and she says, “people with cancer have a greater deal of uncertainty in their lives. You're forced to confront these uncertainties and thoughts of mortality, and that is why Penn's Program for Stress Management would benefit people of any age fighting any stage or type of cancer.”

Dr. Baime's program has helped many patients who have been or are going through a cancer journey. Michele says,

“I take a little time every day to sit in silence and just be. Meditation to me is so restorative; it's the biggest gift that I've gotten from this entire experience.”

Michele's experience with Penn's Program for Stress Management is inspiring. She sought out a way to deal with the anger and frustration she had from her difficulties getting initially diagnosed, and found a new outlook on life. With her endless flow of positive words, Michele is a strong advocate for the program and actively volunteers by sharing her experience, so that others may benefit from the program as well.

Michele is still undergoing treatments and is still a regular at Dr. Baime's sessions. She is also back at work as a nurse anesthetist. Now, she focuses on the most important things in life – spending time with her daughter Natalie, who is a student at Columbia University, and staying positive about beating her cancer. ♦



*Michele Gossett embraces Michael Baime, M.D., Director of Penn's Program for Stress Management.*

© Alan Kolt