

## **Male Breast Cancer Global Alliance Fall Summit 2025**

### **Before the Results: Staying Grounded When You Can't Know What's Coming**

#### **Session Summary & Key Takeaways**

This 45-minute session focussed on helping you manage scanxiety the unique stress and uncertainty that comes before, during, and after medical scans or oncology appointments. We learned how to notice early signs, interrupt anxiety through breath, and anchor yourself in calm awareness.

#### **The NIA Method**

A simple, three-step process you can use before oncology appointments:

N – Notice: The moment you feel scanxiety creeping in.

I – Interrupt: Use your breath to calm the nervous system.

A – Anchor: Choose a word, image, or practice to ground yourself.

#### **Practice 1: The Worry Line**

1. Draw a simple line — straight, curved, or wavy.
2. Let this line represent the invisible weight you carry: appointments, worry, not knowing.
3. Name one specific thing your line will hold for you today.
4. Notice: when you name your worry, your paper doesn't get heavier — but your heart might feel lighter.

#### **Practice 2: The 4–6 Breath**

A longer exhale tells your nervous system you are safe.

- Inhale through your nose for 4 counts.
- Hold briefly.
- Exhale for 6 counts.

Try 3 rounds, noticing how your body feels afterward.

#### **Practice 3: Choosing Your Anchor**

After you interrupt the anxiety with breath, choose an anchor to return to when your mind races.

#### **Phrase Anchors:**

- 'I can't control the outcome, but I can control this breath.'
- 'I've done hard things before.'
- 'I'm still here. And I'm breathing.'

**Visual Anchors:**

- Picture yourself as a mountain — steady, unshaken.
- Imagine roots growing from your feet into the ground.

**Physical Anchors:**

- Touch each finger to your thumb while counting breaths.
- Gentle neck rolls or slow swaying with breath.

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**Integrating Your Practice**

Take a moment to reflect on these questions:

- When does scanxiety hit me the hardest?
- Where will I practice the 4–6 breath?
- What will I anchor to?
- Who can I text who will simply reply, 'Breathing with you'?

**Closing Thought**

You don't need to be calm all the time — only to know how to find your way back when things feel too loud.

Thank you for being here and taking time to care for yourself today.

**Resources**

For guided breathing practices, episodes, and caregiver support tools, visit

[www.charlottebayala.com](http://www.charlottebayala.com)

or

[www.cancercaregiverpodcast.com](http://www.cancercaregiverpodcast.com)

## **The Scanxiety Response Plan**

You can't control the scan. But you can interrupt the spiral.

Use this plan to support yourself when scanxiety hits, before the appointment, in the waiting room, or any time you start to feel overwhelmed. You only need one breath to begin.

### **Step 1: NOTICE**

What does scanxiety feel like in my body?

(Tension, restlessness, irritability, racing thoughts?)

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**When does it usually hit me the hardest?**

(The night before, the drive to the hospital, in the waiting room?)

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### **Step 2: INTERRUPT**

What will I use to interrupt the spiral?

The 4–6 Breath

- Inhale through the nose for 4 seconds
- Exhale slowly through the mouth for 6 seconds
- Repeat 2–3 rounds

**Where will I use this?**

(Be specific: “in the bathroom before the scan,” “in the car,” etc.)

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**What will remind me to use it?**

(Examples: sticky note, phone alert, breathing bracelet, mantra)

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**Step 3: ANCHOR**

What thought, image, or action will help me stay steady?

(Examples: “I’ve done hard things before,” a calming photo, hand on heart)

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**If I need support, who can I ask to help me remember this plan?**

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**My Scanxiety Reset Phrase:**

“When scanxiety hits, I will \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Download the Scanxiety Toolkit at [www.cancercaregiverpodcast.com/tools](http://www.cancercaregiverpodcast.com/tools)**