Talk to Someone
TRIPLE NEGATIVE BREAST CANCER

CDC embraces the power of virtual humans to give newly diagnosed breast cancer patients on-demand educational support

Close to one in eight women in the U.S. will have an invasive breast cancer in her lifetime and breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women. About 10 to 20% of breast cancers are classified as triple negative, one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer and unlike other breast cancers, one which cannot be treated with hormonal therapy. However, research shows that triple negative breast cancer can respond better to chemotherapy compared to other breast cancers.

Triple negative breast cancer patients have a 77% five-year survival rate compared to 93% of women with other types of breast cancer, in part because they are less likely to pursue chemotherapy treatments that offer the highest chance of survival. In addition, African-American women are two to three times more likely to be diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer compared to white or Hispanic women, yet have lower rates of chemotherapy adherence.

Health researchers hypothesize that reluctance to pursue chemotherapy arises from high health literacy demands placed upon patients to process information about their diagnosis and treatment options.

In an effort to improve survival rates and health outcomes, the CDC Division of Cancer Prevention and Control engaged with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors and health simulation company Kognito, the leading developer of health education simulations, to create an app entitled "Talk to Someone: Triple Negative Breast Cancer."

What is it?
"Talk to Someone:Triple Negative Breast Cancer" is an online and mobile app in which TNBC patients engage in an interactive conversation with Linda, a virtual TNBC survivor. Users lead the conversation by posing their questions about TNBC, chemotherapy, life during treatment, and survivorship to Linda. The objectives of the conversation are for patients to better understand their diagnosis, better understand advantages of chemotherapy, and to know what to expect from treatment, in order to raise motivation to pursue chemotherapy.

Linda, a fully-articulated and emotionally responsive cancer survivor, was created using Kognito's proprietary virtual human technology. Linda speaks to the real life experience of a survivor, possesses extensive knowledge of TNBC, and tailors her messages to each user's knowledge level, concerns, and overall motivation.

Unlike existing patient education solutions on TNBC, this app provides a safe and personalized environment for patients to ask difficult questions and approach emotional topics with a judgement-free, empathetic virtual breast cancer survivor who is always available to talk and never short on time.

"Talk to Someone: Triple Negative Breast Cancer" is:

- Available online and as a mobile app for the general public and for oncology providers to e-prescribe to newly diagnosed patients
- Based on research showing that virtual humans are safe, non-confrontational allies who drive superior levels of engagement resulting in sustained behavior modification
- Developed by Kognito utilizing its proprietary simulation and virtual human platform, which combines gaming technology with the science of learning and the art of conversation to deliver interactive health education. Over one million users have been trained and empowered through the Kognito platform, including healthcare providers, students of health professions, patients, and their caregivers.
- Built with an analytics engine that generates insights on the change in user knowledge and motivation for following CDC treatment recommendations after completing the simulation conversation with Linda