The Impact of Cancer in Children: An Autoethnographic Reflection

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Abstract

This article is an autoethnographic investigation of the impact of childhood cancer. How has cancer made me into who I am today? How has cancer affected my life? How can I use my cancer to help others better understand? In order to address these questions, I place memories within my story to reveal the answers to the questions. As I portray my cancer experience as an understanding of myself, I find that my most cherished moments come from when my family helped and supported me through my journey. My autoethnographic journey links the family systems theory to portray the family as one emotional unit and to point out the complex changes being made in the unit. The theory points out the relationship between parent and child and continues to pursue the emotional connectivity within each system. There is a need for autoethnography to underline questions of self that relate to the family systems and gives insight to my childhood cancer experience.

Autoethnography

The words that are used often through a journey of difficulty are words of fear, anxiety, and mistrust. My childhood was often filled with uncertainty due to illness. “Uncertainty is not closed or locked but an ambiguous, open space for interpretation where people come up with explanations and negotiate meanings through their creativity, imaginations, and emotions” (Wake, 2017, pg.18). It becomes strenuous to make uncertainty transparent. This illness shaped the difficult journey of my childhood.

In the fall of 2010, I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, the memories that spark from that journey are always traumatizing. This occurrence of being misdiagnosed was shocking and confusing. My body refused the treatment for rheumatoid arthritis and that placed me in a wheelchair. The trauma is explained as if someone is performing surgery on the wrong leg, my misdiagnosis led to more pain than necessary.

In the spring of 2011, I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Next thing I know, I was starting treatment. I have flashbacks to this time, and I remember feeling very confused as they loaded medicine into my body. The nurses were discussing the surgery I needed to have in order to receive the chemotherapy treatment. I remember feeling lost and worried that the treatment would not work, “one can actually feel frozen due to feeling depressed and anxious in not knowing how to move forward with life” (Simeus, 2016, pg.1). Later that morning, we discussed the treatment plan and how often I would get it. “A traumatic diagnosis such as cancer evokes feelings of fear and hopelessness in the bravest of individuals, and these emotions, coupled with feelings of a loss of control over one’s health can result in negative outcomes for many” (Harris, 2008, pg. 5).

Treatments lasted the whole day, I had little desire to eat due to the way chemo made me feel afterward. It was very difficult for me to stay positive during my treatments, anything I did would make me nauseated. After treatments, it would be a miserable ride home. I remember my parents asking me what I wanted to eat but nothing sounded appetizing. Nonetheless, my parents recommended me to eat because they knew I would feel sick later. To have a secure family unit during this time is necessary because as a child, cancer cannot be approached alone. My family unit provided me with security and understanding throughout my cancer experience.

As time progressed, the treatments made me weaker and unable to do things on my own. I lost much of my weight and my hair started to fall out, so much that I had to shave my head and go bald. This impacted my life through many different aspects at school and with my friends. My parents pulled me out of school and let me do it online, but I had little desire. I was not learning anything; I could not hang out with my friends like I wanted to or go where I wanted to go. Though I could not accomplish the things I sought to accomplish, my family was patient and supportive.
of the strength I portrayed loosely. My faith in God was wavering, making me wonder if He left me to do cancer on my own. I wrestled knowing that my faith in God was struggling. My family continued to give me the love of God despite my little efforts of understanding what He was doing through cancer.

These times of treatment became a difficult journey, but it shaped me into the person I am today. My family, to this day, reminds me that there is a purpose in my cancer. The family unit as a whole remarks on the story and explains the struggles to which we all experienced. Because I explained my cancer and everything associated with it, I can now explain the importance of the aftermath. Although the cancer left me feeling weak and unproductive, I was able to be restored into who I used to be. The treatment may have altered my learning and thinking abilities, but I am still able to portray the cancer I once had.

Through research and experience, I have a complete understanding of the effects of cancer in children. As a 6-year cancer survivor, the effects have made me more passionate about childhood cancer. My family is a huge advocate for making cancer in children more aware in the world. Although we have experienced many struggles together, my family has chosen to express concern and appreciation for other families dealing with childhood cancer.

During my cancer journey, many questions were asked about cancer, like who would I be after cancer? What are all the side effects that chemotherapy has given me? Will the side effects linger long after cancer? Where is God in my cancer journey? How can I trust God again? After my cancer journey, I now ask questions like, how has cancer impacted me into the person I am now? What about cancer has impacted me the most? Can the cancer come back? Was my identity found in cancer? How can I use cancer to help others better understand? How can I be an advocate for childhood cancer awareness? How can I support childhood cancer families?

My goal for writing my story is to heighten the knowledge of childhood cancer by administering my perspective through my story. This autoethnography will provide an insider's view of how cancer is observed. Many people do not understand how severe the effects of childhood cancer can be. It affects the family physically, psychologically, emotionally and spiritually. I choose to approach my cancer experience through a family systems theory, “a family system consists of human dependencies and emotional needs present in all societies at all times” (Hall, 1981, pg. 21). I was able to depend upon my family for every aspect of what I thought or felt. My story expands into detail discussing the absolute worst experiences of treatment and touching on some of the long-term side effects of treatment. Although the treatments and effects are not the same for every cancer patient, each person has a story within their cancer.

Autoethnography as Method

My method in this study provides an insight through perspective to contribute comprehension to the topic of my childhood cancer experience. Through reference to my own cancer experiences, autoethnography is used to “enhance our understanding of biographical reconstruction and individual liminality through descriptions of wisdom imparted by the cancer experience itself” (Hannum, 2017, pg. 89). Through this qualitative research, I can explain the experience I faced more thoroughly and share a raw connection by story. Autoethnography is made to compose “research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political” (Ellis, 2004, pg. xix). Autoethnography focuses mainly on “personal lived experiences and their relationship to culture” (Ellis, 2004; Ellis et al., 2011, pg. 1). Personal experience conducts descriptions and interpretations of “cultural texts, experiences, beliefs and practices” (Adams et al., 2017, pg. 1). The autoethnography includes my vulnerable thoughts, emotions, and beliefs. “It seeks to share stories that may affect reality, celebrates experience and detail, examines the meaning in the experience, notices the concern in moral, ethical, and political consequences, highlights compassion and empathy, and helps us to live and to cope” (Ellis, 1999, pg. 669).

Autoethnography is recorded more as a method rather than only an approach due to the underlying result of story from experience that displays research. This research leads to the lasting experiences of my childhood cancer. Since autoethnographies are based off personal experiences, “they present particular embodied events with people in time and their social shaping and how these events can be seen as emblematic of wider cultural meanings and social trends” (Ettorre, 2006, pg. 153). The goal of autoethnographies is to examine the self and to understand further the experience regarding self. Auto-ethnographers have put the emphasis of self to discuss the importance of better understanding personal experiences. I chose autoethnography to strengthen awareness of cancer in children and show the connection between the child with cancer, the cancer, and the family as an emotional unit.
within the cancer. “Cancer has a life-changing impact on every family member’s views, behaviors, values, or beliefs” (Marshall, 2010, pg. xi). This signifies the impact of cancer to be equal among child and parent. According to Bowen, “Families are systems of interconnected and interdependent individuals, none of whom can be understood in isolation from the system.”

I chose autoethnography to openly and vulnerably answer the challenging questions of my cancer experience (How has cancer impacted me into the person I am now? What about cancer has impacted me the most? How do I use my cancer journey to help others understand childhood cancer?) I want to study and consider self to implement relationship between child and parent in my cancer experience. This emphasizes self on relationship to explain the connection between the two and highlight the interaction.

**Theoretical Framework**

What is the impact of cancer in children? According to Barlow and Ellard (2005, pg. 20), “the presence of physical symptoms, such as pain and fatigue, combined with the need for disease management regimes, are likely to interfere with many aspects of daily life not only of the children but also of their parents and siblings”. The question is important for the parents who need reassurance of their child’s diagnosis, it provides insight to the truth of childhood illness. It is important for parents to know that there is research available to explain childhood cancer and to consider the short-term and long-term effects of the cancer. The family systems theory explains human behavior by viewing the family as an emotional unit which connects family members to describe complex interactions in the unit. Murray Bowen, the creator of this theory, says that “it is the nature of a family that its members are intensely connected emotionally…families so profoundly affect their members’ thoughts, feelings, and actions that it often seems as if people are living under the same “emotional skin”” (Kerr, 2000, pg. 1). “Family systems theory was found to be a useful framework for understanding the variance of positive and negative family adaptation in the survivorship of childhood cancer and the cultural impact on the family level variables” (Yi, 2009, pg. 228). “In families of children with cancer, parents provide care that may include symptom management (monitoring and alleviation), and other dependent care strategies for the child during cancer treatments” (Williams P. et al., 2006, pg. 40).

The change within the family system requires the parents to use dependent care strategies to strengthen their parenting skills for the ill child. With that being said, children who are ill need more attention and protection than those who are not. The family systems theory provides an understanding of the emotional connectivity within the family as a whole. This method furthers the understanding of the necessities of the child affected by cancer. “Treating cancer from a systems perspective can be seen as an opportunity for strengthening the position of family members in understanding and dealing with the illness” (Marshall, 2008, pg. 10). This theory will be used in my study as the theoretical framework to help explain the impact that cancer has on children and the family.

**Biblical Framework**

Although some are born into different families before becoming believing Christians, we are in the same family as God and are represented as the children of God. In John 1:12-13, it is explained as, for those who believe in him are given the right to become the children of God. One must believe in God before he can join the family of God, this will result in a loving and supportive family. In Galatians 3:26, it is explained that “for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.” It is relevant through these two verses that there are differences between our earthly family and our Godly family. Our family on the earth fails day to day therefore, we need a godly family for support, encouragement, understanding, and love. God’s perfect love exists through those who have sought a relationship with Jesus. In 1 John 4:18, it says “There is no fear in love. But perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” Anyone who may experience cancer must have the support from their family not out of fear but out of love. Support is necessary during this season of life. Nobody would be able to face cancer with a conditional, fear-driven support from the family. The family is needed for every aspect of life whether physically, emotionally, psychologically or spiritually. The child and the family together will experience a rollercoaster of emotions and will need the support from each other to overcome the battle. When a child is in pain, it is immediate for the mother of the family to want to comfort her child. Comfort and support are a necessity when dealing with a child with cancer. God comforts and delivers us from our pain, through prayer God will deliver his plan to relieve us of our struggle and provide His comforting hand. It is about a surrendering trust in God. The support system begins and ends with God, all we need to do is trust.

**My Autoethnographic Album**
Throughout this album, I long to explain my experiences from my questions of self that I presented in my story. I want to project a photographic effect through verbal interpretation of the mental images I hold of these experiences. “Listening to the experiences of cancer patients is vital to improving the quality of the cancer patient experience and their subsequent survivorship experience” (O’Connor, 2011, pg. 141). I hope to encourage and deliver my interpretation correctly and in a way that can be understood. I combine memories and questions to discuss stories that together form an outline of my cancer impacted life. In this album I will be discussing through memories the questions I longed to know during cancer and the questions I want to know now that I no longer have cancer. And through discussing these questions, I will be able to value my life story more because I can share it with researchers all over.

**How Has Cancer Impacted Me into the Person I Am Now?**

The toll that cancer has taken on me marks how cancer has impacted me. Through short-term and long-term effects, cancer has left its mark on the most prominent aspects of my life. Chemotherapy treatment, as awful as it is, was a contribution to my journey because it provided me with relief from the pain of cancer itself. Treatment also provided doctors, nurses, and child-life specialists to give assurance of relief. An aspect of cancer that brought hope was the experience to go to camp, camps that are designed for children with cancer are a blessing. I did not have to worry about my cancer at camp, I was just a person, a person that felt worth. The best contribution to cancer was my family, although I did not see it right away, they were what I needed most to make it through. To this day, they are still my biggest support system, continuously guiding me in God’s truth, grace, and love. “It is during such times a person confronts waves of emotions such as shock, fear, hopelessness, depression, hospitality, anxiety, and a sense of social isolation” (Harris, 2008, pg. 5).

Chemotherapy treatment brought horrible times into my cancer journey. Different types of chemotherapy brought many different effects. “Issues survivors face include forming and maintaining relationships, coping with unemployment or lack of health insurance, and struggling with lasting cancer recurrence risk or diminished fertility” (Eschler, 2017, pg. iii). During treatment, nausea and vomiting occurred, causing much pain for the nights ahead. Treatment was necessary for the relief of cancer suffering but brought more suffering than you could imagine. “In all the situations in which suffering comes about the meaning of the occurrence to this person and the person’s perceptions of the future are crucial” (Cassell, 2011, pg. 9). Treatment days lasted from morning to afternoon, and sometimes early evening. Although a long day with a time-consuming process, “both cancer patients and members of their family greatly appreciate the empathic support of skilled professionals when facing such an important watershed in their lives” (O’Connor, 2011, pg. 142). I can flashback to that time and the back room of the cancer floor in the hospital and see the different cubicles of cancer kids getting their infusion for the day. I remember the looks on everyone’s faces and the liquid dripping into their I.V.’s. Nobody was excited to be there, but the nurses tried to make it as comfortable as possible as they treat each of us with the medicine we need.

Knowing that I had cancer left me feeling hopeless and insecure, unsure of where my life was going. I lost all my trust in God, “the nature of suffering is such that sometimes we are not able to rationalize it, or find any meaning in it” (Barton-Burke, 2008, pg. 236). I felt alone and worried because I did not know that God was there for me, nor did I care to know. I struggled so much in my faith that I became dismissive to anything pertaining to God. My family and friends continued to encourage me with Bible verses, like Romans 8:28 or Psalm 23, yet I did not want to hear them. I am glad to know that even though I did not have trust in Him, He still had a plan laid out for me, and He has continued to pursue me every day since. In His plan, He gave me cancer so that I could tell others about Him and His good works. The story of my cancer is about how God saved me from the pits of myself to the height of His glory. God pursued me through the Scripture my parents showed me every day and the Lord was working through them to point me back to truth. The truth being Jesus is Lord and He is merciful in His provision which interprets His plan. I have memories of asking myself during cancer, “is cancer really what God has planned for me?” Though I am not knowledgeable in all that God brings to His people, I am sure that my cancer experience is a part of His plan because I am able to embrace the illness that he gave me with open arms and show others the truth He brought throughout. Cancer has made me into the person I am today – thankful for the opportunity to fight through an experience that led me closer to who God is and appreciate all that He did for my life before, during, and after cancer.

My family was the best thing that I could have during cancer. They helped through constant hospital visits and appointments. They took care of me during my darkest moments of pain and suffering. They took off work to help
through long and miserable days, weeks, and months at the hospital. Though each day was a hard day, they continued to encourage me with bible verses and shined the light of Jesus on me every day, and they consistently prayed over me and encouraged others too also. As difficult as this time was, they were the best support system I could have during this time. Dr. Bowen’s, family systems theory explains that “a change in one person sparks a change in in how other members of the family unit act and feel as well.” In addition, Robinson et al., (2007, pg. 400) notes that “children whose parents were distressed were more likely to be distressed themselves”. I remember the countless nights waking up to the nurses coming in to change my line, and my mom or dad waking up too to make sure that I was okay. “When a child is diagnosed with cancer, parents enter unfamiliar terrain, where their basic childrearing tasks are challenged” (Papaikonomou, 2007, pg. 65).

During the times I had been admitted into the hospital, sometimes I would be in a ton of pain and other times I would be feeling fine, confused as to why I was even there and upset that my parents drove me here for no reason. “Using the family systems theory, we believe that a systems-oriented intervention serves the best interests of the child, family, and health care team” (Kazak et al. 2002, pg. 135). Family systems theory explains the overall best interest for a family as a whole. “All physical illness profoundly affect the family life of the patient and the changed family circumstances in turn have impact upon the physically ill patient” (Sholevar and Perkel, 1990, pg. 363). Though circumstances may change with or without cancer, this theory explains that certainly, a physical illness will change the way the family looks at life. “The family systems theory suggests that when a person is diagnosed with cancer, the entire family must find ways to incorporate the experience into daily life” (Minuchin, 1974, pg. 1). Everything changes within the family system and they must learn how to incorporate the new experiences into life. “Family systems frameworks are broad and multidisciplinary, sharing the common assertion that human behavior should be conceptualized at a level broader than the individual” (Kazak et al, 2002, pg. 134).

Child-life specialists gave me hope for the next day, they came into my room to distract me from my procedures and pain. Child-life specialists’ duty is to engage children with cancer by providing support during medical procedures, distraction by making crafts, preparing me for surgeries or procedures, and helping me cope with my cancer. I remember the excitement when my child-life specialist came into my room because it meant that I could create a bracelet or necklace and have company to do it with. They were my most favorite aspect of the hospital. “Child life specialists are keenly aware of the perspective and concerns of children and the benefits of family-centered care and, thus, are valuable consultants regarding the physical environment of pediatric settings and the effect of these settings on the behavior and adaptation of children” (Council, C.L. 2006, pg. 1760). Child-life specialists provided understanding through different procedures, and further developed a familial relationship with both my parents and I which helped through the difficulties of cancer.

Nurses provided instruction through appointment visits and checkups. They encouraged me to stay strong and positive. Nurses have a valuable role in the life of children with cancer, they are there to help us through our most difficult situations. I remember the little things the nurses have done for me like bringing me goldfish and Gatorade for me to eat and drink after my procedure. I have memories of walking the hospital halls after my procedures and feeling thankful for the nurses who care for me. “The intensely personal and professional relationship that develops between pediatric oncology nurses and their patients can only be strengthened by the knowledge that these patients generally grew up to be caring and empathetic individuals, perhaps as a result of the nurses loving care for them” (Karian, V et al., 1998, pg. 153). This explains the necessity of nurses as part of the family because they provided tender care despite the situation.

Every child with cancer is offered the opportunity to go to camp to engage in activities and make new friends. I had the opportunity to go to Camp Sunshine for five years during and after cancer. Camp Sunshine brought me so much joy through the activities, cabinmates who became my friends, nurses who volunteered as counselors, camp twin lakes staff, the band that played songs after every meal, the camp directors, and the photographers. Every child affected by cancer needs to experience a camp like this. “Cancer allows for new connections to be made” (Marshall, 2010, pg. xxiv). The fondest memories I have of camp is singing songs and dancing after meals with my friends. My favorite thing at camp was when my cabin went to the same activity and we did it altogether. Camp provided me with so much joy and reminders that I am worth so much more than my cancer.

“Treatment effects of hair loss or weight loss from chemotherapy, weight gain from steroids, scarring from surgery...will influence the individual identity and self-esteem” (Lewis, 1996, pg. 888). “Physicians and families
have become aware that cancer has huge implications for the quality of the child’s life” (Eiser, 2004, p. 2). Every part of cancer has influenced the way I live now and the person I have become. Even when the times got harder and the weight of cancer got heavier, I find joy in knowing that everything was a part of God’s plan, where He could use me to show others the goodness and the truth, He brought to me during my experience. I learned that even though cancer is messy, it served a purpose in my life. Knowing this allows me to appreciate everything that came along with cancer. The impact cancer made on my life gave me the desire to show awareness of childhood cancer and support families who are going through what my family went through. By this, I can show the impact that cancer has made on me.

What About Cancer Has Impacted Me the Most?

Everything about cancer is extraordinarily terrifying when you look at it from an inside perspective. “The diagnosis of cancer left me with a feeling of drowning and gasping for anything to hang onto until rescued” (Harris, 2008, pg. 5). There are only a few things that can bring light into a cancer journey. The one thing that impacted me most during my journey was the amount of Jesus my parents poured into my daily life as a child with cancer. It may not seem like much, especially since I was defiant of Jesus and God, but I do not know who I would be without it. “All glory belongs to Jesus Christ, because he is the Lord of the church who has determined to care for his suffering saints through the gift of his people” (Mellinger & Mellinger, 2018, p. 18). Their encouragements surfaced around God and brought my focus in on Him. “I knew God was behind me (and before me), but the intensity of the fear made it difficult to trust him” (Schmucker, 2017, p. 7). I knew before cancer that He had a plan for my life, but I did not know during cancer what exactly that plan was and now I see fully that cancer was the biggest part of His plan that I could imagine. “Christ has purchased redemption, demonstrated its physical reality in his healing ministry, and given us a foretaste of it by healing many people in our day, but some very slowly, some only partly, and some not at all” (Piper, 1980, p. 26). My parents led our family spiritually through God’s Word and everyday explained the reasons why we should trust God. Romans 8:26 says, “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” The spirit guides us with prayers and supplies us with strength though our battles. According to Piper (2006, p. 7), “Satan designs to destroy your love for Christ. God designs to deepen your love for Christ. Cancer does not win if you die. It wins if you fail to cherish Christ.”

Cancer can be extremely scary but when you have a solid support system behind you, it becomes more comforting. The family systems theory discusses the emotional bond as a family to tackle life’s unexpected circumstances and embrace it all by support. “It is obvious that illness has an impact on the family as a whole” (Benzein et al., 2015, pg. 137). I remember my cancer journey like it was yesterday, without the support system of my family, I would be a completely different person. In family systems theory, “family members co-create a context for living with illness” (Arestedt et al., 2014, pg. 29). My family had to live a different lifestyle that matched up with my experience so that we would be on the same level. This means that they had to face the struggles that I was facing daily to embrace the cancer lifestyle. It was through the emotional bond, that my parents could support me in any way needed. I felt loved and needed, but I also felt so alone because nobody else my age was going through something like I was. That is when my faith in Jesus slipped, I did not understand why I was the only one going through what I was going through. “How come I had to go through something this big? Why me?” Those questions were asked several times during cancer. It became difficult to see myself as who I used to be.

When I reached remission and I looked back at everything that I had gone through, I saw where God was at work and I understood that all of this was a part of His plan. “Remission does not mean a lifetime freedom from cancer… every time we get a cold, our hip aches, we feel dizzy, and our fears whisper cancer, we’ll have to lift up arms against the enemy” (Nelson, 2015, p. 4). Many do not realize that cancer is an ongoing battle whether still facing it or have been in remission for years. Anytime I feel unusual, I become concerned for my health. Having faced cancer before does not terrify me from the chance of it returning, my trust in God is solid. Dr. David Jeremiah (2006, p. 3), in remission, said “he has learned many things through his experience with cancer, including the power of prayer, the persistence of Satan and the perspective of attitude.” Mark Hall (2017, p. 25), in his cancer experience, said “I remembered the ultimate vulnerability of Jesus when he was nailed to the cross for all mankind to behold. It gave me the strength that I needed.” My parents contributed so much to my journey and my life that I will not ever know how to truly thank them for everything they did for me. “While the impact of a cancer diagnosis on the lives of family members is recognized – affected family members are referred to as co-survivors of cancer” (Marshall, 2010,
pg. xviii), they are impacted by the cancer equally as much as I have been. God is changing me for the better and allowing me to live a life that glorifies Him again.

**How Do I Use My Cancer Journey to Help Others Understand Childhood Cancer?**

Many of the aspects I shared about my cancer journey led me to the desire of making childhood cancer awareness available to other families for support. Every six months to a year, I am required to get a check-up to understand the risks and make sure nothing else has appeared. Cancer story is a representation of the reality of childhood cancer. Each day brings its own set of confusion and chaos. Sometimes days ran together and other days it felt like they lasted a whole year. I discuss my cancer journey ultimately as an inspiration to trust in God and remember that He does have a plan for every person even when you cannot see it or understand it in the moment. Looking back, I remember thinking that I could do it all on my own, but I realized I needed God to complete the process. “As more people will age with a history of cancer than ever before, it is important to consider how experiences of cancer affect the life course through the bending of time and its interpretation” (Hannum, 2017, pg. 89).

By careful clarification, I was able to precede my memories with an understanding of what happened.

**The Resolved Cancer Impacted Life**

My autoethnographic album captures and reconstructs memories and moments that will last a lifetime. My album portrayed an intense and profound journey where many feelings, emotions, and understandings have surfaced. I do not know what my readers have experienced but I hope that my story has inspired them and given them hope for their own lives. The hope of reminiscing on my cancer journey is to carry out purpose that may relate to others.

In my own journey, I have come to realize the treasure of sharing my perspective among those who need it the most. My most treasured memories come from the moments and times when I remember how cancer impacted me. As a child entering cancer, the relationships made with nurses and doctors showed me that they valued me as a person not just by my cancer. I also am thankful that they acknowledged my cancer as part of me.

When I first embarked on this autoethnographic experience, I had no idea that my memories could take me back to that time in my life. After completing the verbal images from my autoethnographic album, I remember examining and clarifying the pain and the joy that was brought among the memories.

**My Cancer Impacted Life**

- **What is it?**
  - Childhood cancer
  - Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia

- **What is the purpose of it?**
  - To find the true meaning of how cancer impacts life.

- **What is the process of it?**
  - Discussing through memories and moments to value life.

- **How do you bring childhood cancer awareness?**
  - By sharing your story with others.
The diagram offers an understanding of how to bring awareness of childhood cancer. From this perspective, I explain what it is I am trying to bring awareness of, what the purpose of cancer is, what the process is, and finally, how to bring childhood cancer awareness. The best scenario in bringing awareness is explaining to others the aspects of my story that contributed the most in my life. The worst part about it is explaining the pain and suffering that came along in my journey. Each step in my journey influenced how I lived and how I saw the world. Throughout my journey, it was difficult for me to see how my story could impact others. My hope for this autoethnography is to bring awareness of a cancer impacted life for support in others cancer impacted lives. “Diagrams (or frameworks) provide scaffolding for the story. What comes first? What comes last? Is there some correlation or causality?” (Consultant’s Mind, 2018, p. 4). Diagrams are used to move the story along and have a better understanding of what is being explained.

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