



A1: Personal accounts of health care experiences

Type of Exercise: written assignment

Level: Advanced

Length of time: 2-3 hours to read the book, 1-2 hours to answer the questions

Resources needed: Access to the book: Lorde, A. (1980). *The cancer journals*. San Francisco, CA: Spinsters/Aunt Lute (available on [Amazon](#) or [Barnes & Noble](#))

Instructions: Assign students to read Audre Lorde's *Cancer Journals* and answer the questions below in a 2-3 page reaction paper. Have students share their reactions in a classroom discussion, using some of the following questions to guide the discussion.

- What are some of the effects of cancer on women, on black women, on lesbians?
- What can we learn from the experiences of Lorde? What stands out for you regarding the reading?
- How might you go about having a discussion with the partner of a lesbian who has had a mastectomy?
- How would you go about assisting the two women to talk about their feelings of grief and loss?
- It is likely that the couple will have questions about having sex again, how would you go about initiating this conversation?

Additional Discussion Questions:

- What information in the oncology department provides information for LGBTQ persons being treated for any type of cancer? If there is no information, how might you go about bringing this to the attention of the unit manager, director, or other leaders?
- People with cancer often have questions about resuming sexual activity after surgery or other treatments. How do you feel about addressing sexual activity with a same-sex couple? What about a transgender person's relationships? What information do you need to do this effectively?



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