Dr. CA Tolchinsky has spent the past 20 + years working as an educator, coach and administrator.

Diagnosed with Breast Cancer in February, 2011, CA chose to continue working throughout surgery and chemotherapy. She chose to be transparent throughout her fight in the hopes of showing the NSU student athletes the importance of never giving up – no matter what the situation.

Q16

It was so painful to first find out that I had cancer, then to disclose this information to my family, and preparing for bilateral mastectomy surgery. (Emotionally challenging) The second difficult phase was to recover from the surgery and prepare for six rounds of chemotherapy (physically challenging). The third phase was learning how to live with a new image, and talk openly about it in order to assist others. It took a lot of perseverance just to leave my home bald, but coming in to an office full of student athletes in dreadlock wigs, and days like that helped me twist this into something positive.

Q17

I had a choice. I could let the pain, emotions and frustrations bring me down, or I can push through with courage and a positive outlook. With the help of my colleagues and coaches and students, I chose the latter. The subsequent surgeries were obstacles that had to be climbed, and it feels as if it will never end, as I am preparing for yet another surgery.

Q 18:

"Dear Cancer, You Messed with the Wrong Mom" is a book version of the journal CA and her nine year old son kept to capture and respond to the many questions he had after finding out that his mom had breast cancer. They published it to help others don't know what to expect and the Tolchinskys inspired to make it easier for children and their parents.

Q19

In sharing this experience with others and being so transparent throughout the whole process enabled CA to display determination to face adversity with a positive outlook and the difference that positivity can make in a situation. Student athletes are faced with personal issues and it was an opportunity to take these teachable moments to put everything into perspective. (example :”Wah! Coach didn’t put me in yesterday –my life is over.” Really? (Don’t know how to put that into words!!)