Unbreakable Spirit

The Inspiring Journey of Ida Chibweza. A strong woman who survived Breast Cancer after enduring 13 surgeries, 12 rounds of chemotherapy and 35 sessions of radiation therapy.

Let's hear all about it through a series of Q & A sessions Please tell us about yourself.

In 2019 the 15th of October.

It was during one of the pink drive campaigns done in October and I went for a free screening and the results where that it was just a fatty tissue that I didn't need to worry about, and I lived for a whole year with that assurance but during the course of the year, I kept noticing some lump and then I decided to take it up with the bond and city doctor. Who did a sonar and she did confirm that the lump does look suspicious and she ordered a biopsy. I then went and did a biopsy which came back being inconclusive and went for a second biopsy which confirmed that I had stage 3 ductal carcinoma in situ, because the cancer had moved from my lymph node into my breast.

When you found out about your Breast cancer diagnosis what was your reaction?

I was scared, I was worried, I went numb! I think I stopped breathing for a minute because it was worrying.

I went there very hopeful for a negative result, and I was really positive about it, but it came back with a negative feedback, I was very worried and not prepared for it. I really didn't know what to do.

When did you start your treatment and how long did it take you to complete it?

I am still on treatment because it is a very long journey, fighting cancer is a very long journey, I started with surgery which is a mastectomy to remove my right breast totally in December / November 2018 then in 2019 I did chemotherapy which is like almost a year because I was doing chemo every single Friday then after chemotherapy I did 35 sessions of radiation daily and then after radiation I started hormone therapy which I am still on because I am supposed to be on for 10 years and I've got 6 more years to go. So, I haven't finished treatment, I am still on treatment, but I am done with all the major surgeries in total. I have done almost 13 surgeries from all my diagnosis.

How did you manage your Finances?

To be honest it is really financially draining as this was unexpected and un-planned for. I found myself in a very difficult situation. I was not on medical aid, and I kept working, I actually survived on loans, every time I had to go for surgery, I would get a loan so that I could go and do my surgeries and I would make a payment plan with the company I was working for. Then in 2020 I got a job in Platinum Health, and I moved over to Rustenburg. The job came with medical aid, and I completed the remainder of my treatment under PH which was Radiation and my six-monthly oncology visits which is covered by Platinum Health.

What advice would you give someone who's been recently diagnosed with breast cancer or cancer ?

My message to them is "DON'T GIVE UP" Cancer diagnosis is not the end of your story, stay informed, ask questions and surround yourself with positivity, there will be tough days but everyday you wake up is proof that you are stronger than cancer, Listen to your body, follow your treatment and most importantly believe in your healing.