

Embracing Resilience: A Cancer Survivor's "ASCO Voices" Experience

At ASCO's annual meeting, breast cancer survivor and advocate Megan-Claire Chase spoke about Black patients and clinical trials.

July 30, 2026 By Megan-Claire Chase

ASCO Voices, aka My "Broadway Debut," Was Never About the Stage

There's a moment after every big dream comes true when the adrenaline wears off.

Then comes the question:

"Was it really as good as everyone said?"

For weeks after the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting in Chicago, I couldn't bring myself to watch the recording of my ASCO Voices talk.

I had spent months writing every sentence, rehearsing every pause, timing every story, and wondering if seven minutes could somehow change the way clinicians and pharma thought about Black patients and clinical trials.

When I finally pressed play...

[ASCO Voices Talk - When Representation Becomes Survival: Changing My Perspective on Clinical Trials](#)

Megan-Claire Chase in her ASCO Voices Talk, "When Representation Becomes Survival: Changing My Perspective on Clinical Trials," June 2026. Courtesy of asco.org

I surprised myself.

It was actually...pretty darn good.

Not because it was perfect.

Because it was honest.

What most people didn't see that day was everything I carried onto that stage.

I wasn't simply a speaker.

I was a breast cancer survivor.

A patient advocate.

A professional working in cancerland.

An only child who is a caregiver for my mother, who is living with a rare blood cancer.

A Black woman navigating a country that often feels increasingly hostile to people who look like me.

A survivor who had severe pain from fibromyalgia and bad back pain was screaming.

The chemo-induced peripheral neuropathy knocking me off balance.

My post-cancer body was stiff and overweight due to surgical menopause.

None of that disappeared when I stood in the spotlight.

I just didn't let it suffocate me.

As a Black woman in and out of cancerland, I'm often praised for being resilient.

But resilience isn't effortless.

Sometimes resiliency looks like smiling while your pain level is a twelve.

Sometimes it looks like delivering your best performance while compartmentalizing racism, rage, and trauma.

Sometimes it looks like showing up anyway, even when emotionally exhausted.

Watching that recording reminded me that our inner critic rarely tells the whole story.

I didn't see someone struggling.

I saw someone confident, focused, humorous, and authentic.

And maybe that's the lesson I needed most.

Sometimes we need to become the audience to finally appreciate our own performance.

When I called ASCO Voices, my "Broadway debut", people laughed.

I wasn't joking.

Theatre was my first love.

Long before cancer.

Long before advocacy.

Long before hashtags.

Standing on that stage felt like every version of Megan-Claire finally meeting in one place.

The little girl who dreamed of winning a Tony and an Oscar.

The woman who survived breast cancer but still had dreams.

The advocate who battles impostor syndrome but continues to speak up anyway.

For seven unforgettable minutes.....

I was doing what I love most.

I was just me speaking my truth.

And it was enough.

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

[The post](#) was originally published on [Life on the Cancer Train](#).

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