Abstract: Many people with serious diseases use online support groups to exchange social support. In this presentation, we describe three studies in a large, online breast cancer group that examined the social dynamics of exchanging support. For these groups to be effective, members must both seek support and provide it. For the groups to be sustained, some members must continue to participate. Using machine learning techniques to automate content analysis of 1.5 million messages and longitudinal data analysis, we examine how people get support and the impact of support on group satisfaction and commitment. Although members asked explicit questions to get informational support, they used both positive and negative self-disclose to elicit emotional support. Because providing emotional support has implication for the relationship between the provider and recipient, it became less valuable as a signal of caring if it must be explicitly requested. Moreover, failing to receive support after explicitly requesting it has negative consequences for the seeker’s face. Receiving either informational or emotional support positively predicted participants’ satisfaction with support exchanges. Moreover, recipients were more satisfied if the support they received matched the support they sought, at least for informational support. In contrast, they were equally satisfied with emotional and informational support after seeking emotional support, presumably because any response to them was an indicator that others in the community cared about them. Receiving support also influenced members’ continued participation in the group, with emotional support increasing their commitment substantially more than informational support.