

Online Survivorship Resource: CancerChatCanada.ca

Cancer survivors and their family members face unique consequences of illness and treatment, including psychosocial issues such as the fear of cancer recurrence, emotional vulnerability, altered concept of self, altered interpersonal relationships, and uncertainty regarding the future.

An exciting new website was launched in June 2010, *CancerChatCanada.ca*, as an online resource designed to provide much needed professional support services to people affected by cancer; these services include online support groups (OSG's) for patients, survivors, and caregivers that are facilitated by professional psychosocial oncology counsellors in 90-minute live chats.

The website was developed by the BC Cancer Agency in partnership with Tom Baker Cancer Centre, Cancer Care Manitoba and others with funding from the federal government's Canadian Partnership against Cancer (CPAC) and the Canadian Breast Cancer Research Alliance (CBCRA).

Joanne Stephen, Ph.D. is the lead investigator for development of this online resource.

The program has been providing OSG's since late 2007 and has supported more than 200 participants in 30 groups. Preliminary research indicates that these groups produced helpful benefits, with individuals reporting improved quality of life, lower emotional distress and enhanced coping. With the launch of their new website and a recently added purely Canadian online chat platform and discussion board, the program aims to increase access to supportive care services. Potential participants can register online for support using a secure website and may update their profiles and availability for groups at any time. Coordinators at BCCA contact the potential participants and add

them to new groups, which are now operating at a rate of four per month. Other online support services for people affected by cancer are being developed that will augment online support groups, with the vision of creating a survivorship community to support improved health and emotional wellness in this rapidly growing population.

In December 2010 the program will begin enrolment of young women cancer survivors for a randomized control trial testing peer-led and professional support with an education only control arm. The study will run through 2013 and women under the age of 46 years from all across Canada are eligible.

For more information, please go to:
<https://cancerchatcanada.ca/>

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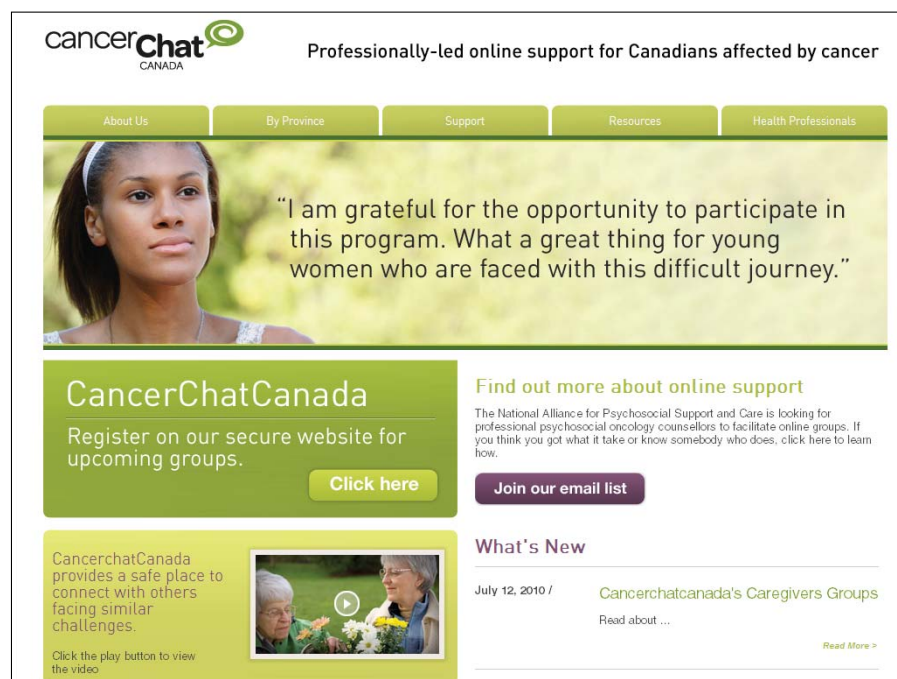
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The screenshot shows the CancerChatCanada website interface. At the top, the logo reads "cancerChat CANADA" with the tagline "Professionally-led online support for Canadians affected by cancer". A navigation menu includes "About Us", "By Province", "Support", "Resources", and "Health Professionals". A large banner features a photo of a woman and the quote: "I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this program. What a great thing for young women who are faced with this difficult journey." Below the banner, there is a "CancerChatCanada" section with the text "Register on our secure website for upcoming groups." and a "Click here" button. To the right, a "Find out more about online support" section includes text about the National Alliance for Psychosocial Support and Care and a "Join our email list" button. At the bottom, a "What's New" section dated July 12, 2010, features a video thumbnail and the title "Cancerchatcanada's Caregivers Groups" with a "Read More" link.

Research on Psychosocial Services for Chinese Patients

Joyce Lee, MA, has completed a Western Regional Training Centre for Health Services Research (WRTC) student field placement with the Patient and Family Counselling Services (PFCS), Vancouver Centre. The placement ran from June to September 2010.

While working at the BC Cancer Agency, Joyce developed a logic model framework to be used for planning psychosocial oncology services for Chinese cancer patients and their support persons. The framework helped delineate program activities that were aligned with four interrelated key pillars of PFCS service delivery across the cancer trajectory: *clinical practice, education,*

research, community capacity building. The program outcomes identified through the framework supported the overarching goal to provide accessible, effective and efficient services to the patient population. Work was completed alongside Gina MacKenzie, MSW, Sandy Kwong, MSW, and Elaine Shearer, MA.

Joyce has a Masters degree in Counselling and Economics and is currently in the Doctoral program with the School of Population and Public Health at the University of British Columbia. Joyce has worked on a number of grants with the BC Cancer Agency's Sociobehavioural Research Centre and PFCS.

Survivorship Care Planning for Cancer Survivors Living in Rural and Remote Communities in Northern British Columbia

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has awarded funding to Dr. Amanda Ward and colleagues at the BC Cancer Agency and Northern Health to advance research and practice in cancer survivorship care planning for survivors living in rural and remote communities in Northern British Columbia.

The purpose of the 2 year project is to enhance long-term outcomes for the cancer survivor population in Northern BC in the form of sustainable survivorship care planning and service delivery.

The number of cancer survivors is increasing annually because of advances in cancer screening, early detection and treatment. As the number of cancer survivors continues to increase, their supportive care needs (both medical and practical)

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will become an important part of the cancer care continuum. Existing follow-up care, interventions and resources for cancer survivors are limited in Northern BC. The project will therefore assess the unmet supportive care needs of cancer survivors living in the region in order to provide them with comprehensive and sustainable survivorship care planning and services.

To be inclusive of the service needs throughout the Northern BC area, the project will work in all the three regions (Northern Interior, North West and North East), specifically, Dawson Creek, Smithers, Terrace and Vanderhoof. Two Aboriginal communities will also be included in the study.

The first phase (year 1) of the project will involve assessment of the unmet needs of cancer survivors and the development of a framework for care planning that is equitable and accessible for all survivors in the North. Members of this project team have started to conceptualize a best practices framework for survivorship care that will build on the work that is currently being put into practice

in the North by the Northern Cancer Control Strategy.

The second phase (year 2) of the project will be the care plan implementation. Two models of care will be tested. The first model is a professionally led model of shared care that is based on partnership and collaboration between the navigation team and the survivor throughout the care plan delivery. The second model is self-directed and managed by the survivor. Phase two of the project will evaluate participant survivor outcomes, such as quality of life, and the overall feasibility and effectiveness of survivorship care planning and service delivery in the North.

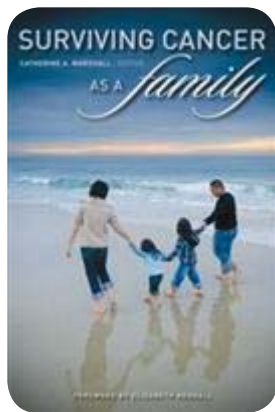
Evaluation of survivorship care and its delivery will provide evidence-based research to be translated into clinical action and sustainable survivorship care and policy development in rural and remote areas of Northern British Columbia.

For more information about the program, please contact Dr. Amanda Ward at award2@bccancer.bc.ca or the Project Coordinator, Chelan Zirul, at Chelan.Zirul@northernhealth.ca

New Resource for Caregivers

New Book for Caregivers: *Surviving Cancer as a Family and Helping Co-Survivors Thrive*

Surviving Cancer as a Family and Helping Co-Survivors Thrive provides readers with knowledge to understand



and cope with a cancer diagnosis of a loved one, or even themselves.

This unique book recognizes that family members need help, sometimes even more than their loved one with cancer. The book uses research and personal experiences to explore answers to practical questions, including how and where to find financial and emotional

support as a caregiver. External influences that may impact the family system are addressed as well, including culture and socioeconomic status.

Congratulations to Sarah Sample, Counsellor at the BC Cancer Agency Vancouver Centre, who authored two chapters in this new book:

- Chapter 2 – “Making new meanings: Cancer and the family”
- Chapter 10 – “We are family: Coping with cancer in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered community”

To learn more or to order this book, go to:

<http://www.praeger.com/books/printFlyer.aspx?sku=C37894>

Sexual Health Clinic to Open in Kelowna

The BC Cancer Foundation, Southern Interior is generously supporting the establishment of a Sexual Health Clinic for cancer patients in the Southern Interior region. BC Cancer Agency health care professionals and researchers are conducting a one year pilot research study to determine the usefulness and effectiveness of offering the Sexual Health Clinic in Kelowna for individuals who have expressed a sexual concern resulting from a cancer diagnosis and/or treatment.

Given that sexual dysfunction is the most common long-term consequence of cancer treatment, it is imperative that services be available to help people address this concern. This is especially important as more people are living longer after cancer treatment and are living with symptoms that result from their disease or the treatment that they received. If you consider that 80% of female cancer patients and around 60% of male cancer patients experience sexual difficulties, there are many people who require specialized care and attention. Currently, resources in the Southern Interior Centre catchment area to help patients address these problems are extremely limited. Having resources available locally where patients can have access to professionals with expertise in sexual health and oncology ensures almost total access to patients.

In view of the fact that sexual functioning poses a serious challenge for many cancer survivors, this pilot project is being conducted to determine how effective a Sexual Health Clinic in Kelowna, catered to the needs of cancer survivors, might be.

The Clinic will take place one half day per month.

Referred patients will be provided with assessment, education and resources by oncology RN, Maureen Ryan, with sexual health training. Where deemed appropriate, a patient may be referred for consultation with Urologist Dr. Ziad Jaklis, Gynecologist Dr. Roberto Leon, Psychiatrist Dr. Lidia Schuster, or a combination of professionals.

Co-PIs on the project are Myrna Tracy, MSW (Professional Practice Leader, Patient & Family Counselling - CSI, BCCA) and Dr. Susan Holtzman (Assistant Professor, UBC - Okanagan), and Dr. Lori Brotto (Associate Professor, UBC) is a consultant. The Clinic is scheduled to open in the new year. The education process is currently underway for some of the professionals involved. Information will be circulated when patient referrals to the Clinic are ready to be accepted.

 **BC Cancer Agency**
CARE + RESEARCH
An Agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Has your cancer or cancer treatment impacted your sexual health?



Individuals who are currently experiencing sexual difficulties which began after having cancer and/or cancer treatment are invited to participate in our study.

Enquiries and/or participation are entirely confidential and will not influence your current or future care with the BC Cancer Agency.

For more information contact Patient & Family Counselling at 250.712.3963 or 1.888.563.7773 (ext.683963)

This research is funded by BC Cancer Foundation, Southern Interior and is conducted by Dr. Holtzman and Myrna Tracy, MSW, RSW with Dr. Brotto consulting

For more information about the Clinic, please contact the CSI Patient & Family Counselling Department at 250-712-3963, or Myrna Tracy at mtracy@bccancer.bc.ca

Upcoming Events

7th Annual International Conference of the Society for Integrative Oncology (SIO).

"Informing the Debate in Practice, Research and Public Policy"

November 11-13, 2010. New York, New York, USA.

www.integrativeonc.org

Canadian Interdisciplinary Network for Complementary & Alternative Medicine Research (IN-CAM). 6th Annual IN-CAM Symposium.

"Complementary and Integrative Health Care: Methodological, Theoretical and Practical Issues"

November 19-21, 2010. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

www.incamresearch.ca

BC Cancer Agency Annual Cancer Conference.

"Interdisciplinary Cancer Control in the 21st Century"

November 25-27, 2010. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

www.bccanceragencyconference.com

8th Annual Conference of the American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS).

"Quality Cancer Care Across the Lifespan: Psychosocial Research and Practice Across Disciplines"

February 17-19, 2011. Anaheim, California, USA.

www.apos-society.org/apos2011/

Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology (CAPO) Annual Conference.

"Searching for Wisdom – Bridging Clinical Practice & Research"

May 4-6, 2011. Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

www.capo.ca/eng/index.asp

National Healthcare Leadership Conference.

"Rising to the Challenge: Resources, Realities and Relationships"

June 6-7, 2011. Whistler, British Columbia, Canada.

<http://www.healthcareleadershipconference.ca/>

Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer/International Society of Oral Oncology (MASCC/ISOO) 2011 International Symposium.

"Supportive Care Makes Excellent Cancer Care Possible"

June 23-25, 2011. Athens, Greece.

www.mascc.org.

Psychosocial Oncology Rounds

Join us from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. every second Wednesday of the month for lunch time learning. Videolink to all 5 cancer centres. Location TBA. For more information on upcoming speakers and topics, contact Elaine Shearer: eshearer@bccancer.bc.ca

Oncology Nutrition Lunch & Learn

Join us on the third Wednesday of every month for lunch time learning from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. by teleconference. For information on upcoming speakers and topics, contact Angela Bowman: abowman@bccancer.bc.ca

Cancer Rehabilitation Network

BCCA's Cancer Rehabilitation Network coordinates regional cancer centre activities for patient and family counselling, psychiatry, and nutrition services. The Rehabilitation Network also works with host hospitals to provide speech pathology and physiotherapy services. Community activities with practitioners are provided through the psychosocial oncology and nutrition oncology networks.

Subscribe

To submit a story idea or to sign up to receive the Connections Newsletter in print or PDF format, please contact:

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e: kburrus@bccancer.bc.ca

More Information

To learn more about the Cancer Rehabilitation Network's activities, please contact:

Joanne Magtoto

t: (604) 877-6000 ext. 3274

e: jmagtoto@bccancer.bc.ca

On the Web

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Psychosocial Oncology

www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/copingwithcancer

Sociobehavioural Research Centre

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