

Cancer Care

Patient Newsletter

by Patient & Family Counselling & Psychiatry Services



BC Cancer Agency
CARE + RESEARCH

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

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LET ME INTRODUCE YOU!

Welcome to our first edition of Cancer Care, Patient Newsletter brought to you by Psychosocial Oncology: Patient & Family Counselling and Psychiatry Services.

Each issue will have a particular focus that relates to supporting cancer patients and their family members through diagnosis and active treatment. You might find strategies to deal with emotions, help for practical concerns or learn more about support for family members.

We hope you learn something new or challenged to share something with others who are going through a cancer experience.



Editor:

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Cancer Care Resource
Social Worker

IN THIS ISSUE:

- * Tips for talking to children about cancer
- * What is Art Therapy?
- * Learn more about cancer and the family resources



Learn more about counselling services visit www.bccancer.bc.ca/our-services/services/patient-family-counselling



CANCER IS A FAMILY AFFAIR

When something bad happens, like cancer, families either pull together or pull apart.

We understand the importance of supporting both the cancer patient and their family members.

Sometimes, family is more than blood and a name but close friends who stand by you when you need them the most.

“When I found out I had cancer my first thought was, how do I tell my kids”

TIPS FOR TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT CANCER

- Communicate openly and honestly with your child. Answer any questions that they may have, but don't give them more information than they are able to handle.
- Be as specific as your child will understand about the disease. If you just say that you are sick or have a “boo boo”, your child may confuse this with their own experiences of illness or injury.
- Let them know about the side effects of treatments, and explain how these changes may also affect them and the rest of the family (i.e. “Mommy will be tired, so she will have less time to play with you.”)
- Assure your child that they did nothing to cause the cancer, and will not catch it. Also let them know that they are loved and will be taken care of during this time.
- Let your child know that it is okay to have a wide range of feelings about what is happening. Encourage them to express these feelings to trusted adults. Creating art may also help them express themselves.
- Inform any caregivers at day care or pre-school of your situation so that they can be prepared to support your child as well.



ART THERAPY

Art therapy is a form of emotional support that uses fine art materials and activities to help people express themselves, as well as find strength and relaxation.

Art therapy can decrease stress and other emotional and physical symptoms of cancer. It has been shown to improve the quality of life for people with cancer. Making art can provide a positive distraction and an outlet for strong emotions.

Making art within a group provides the same benefits of individual art therapy, with the added benefit of a connection between group members affected by cancer.

At the BC Cancer Agency an Art Therapist and trained facilitators provide group programs that use art mediums and techniques. Not all groups mentioned are offered in person. A Centre might offer a video link connection and host other Centres. Groups are open to cancer patients and family members who meet eligibility criteria. No art experience, no problem, it is not necessary in order to attend a group.

Art Therapists



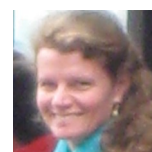
Sara Prins-Hankerson (on leave)

After graduating with a Bachelors

degree in Fine Arts and Art History, Sara went on to study at the Vancouver Art Therapy Institute, where most of her work was done with women and children with cancer. Her thesis focused on using Art Therapy as a form of emotional support for oncology patients. In May 2010, Sara became the Art Therapist at the BC Cancer Agency. Her work includes coordinating the Children's Group and an Art Therapy group for young adults with cancer.

Catherine Dunlop

Cathie joined the BC Cancer Agency as an Art Therapist in January 2014. Cathie's art therapy

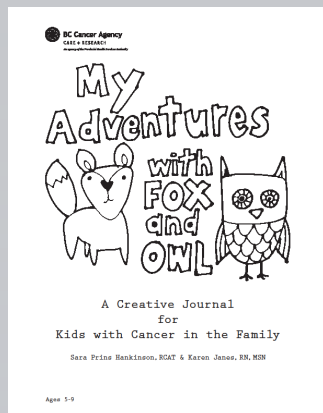


research focused on using imaginal dialogue as a way to understand

archetypes and on using creative expression as a way to improve quality of life of those living with an illness. Her work at the BC Cancer Agency includes facilitating the Expressive Arts Studio, the Arts-based Support Group for Patients with a Brain Tumour, and the Art Therapy Group for Chinese-speaking Patients. Cathie is also a visual artist, working mostly in mixed media.

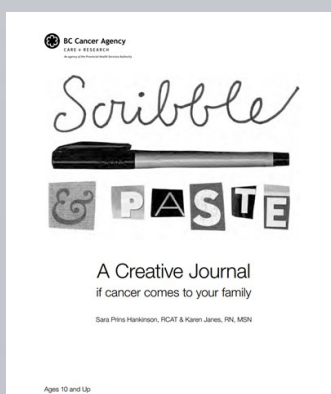
Go to your cancer centre's support programs calendar on the BCCA website to view groups that are available at your centre

FEATURED RESOURCES



My Adventures with Fox & Owl

This is an activity book or children, ages 5 to 9, to help them learn creative ways of coping.



Scribble & Paste

This journal was designed for children ages 10 and up, to help them learn creative ways of coping when a family member is living with cancer.

For more information go to the BCCA website, Cancer & the Family webpage under Resources.

LEARN MORE ...

www.bccancer.bc.ca/health-info/coping-with-cancer/cancer-the-family

Cancer & the Family



Everyone in the family is affected when someone is diagnosed with cancer

When I found out I had cancer the first thing that I thought about was ... how do I tell my kids

A cancer diagnosis and its treatment side effects can affect everyone in the family. In this section you can find information about:

- information and resources for family caregivers

In this section

Cancer & the Family

Facts 4 Teens

Talking with Children & Teens

Family Caregivers

Resources

THE CHILDREN'S GROUP

This program is a support group for children, aged 5-12, who have a close family member living with cancer. The family attends the group together, and there is a concurrent support group session for the parents. An Art Therapist, counsellor and nurse co-facilitate the group.

HOW TO REGISTER:

Families can contact a Patient & Family Counselling office and pre-register. The Centre secretary puts their name on the registration list and notifies the Art Therapist. Registrations will be confirmed prior to the start of the group.

Upcoming Children's Group: Fraser Valley Centre, November 19th

New Resource for Teens!

Getting Through: A guide for middle-school & high-school students when cancer affects the family

Pick up a copy at your Cancer Centre, Patient & Family Counselling Services or download a copy from [Cancer & the Family—resources](#)



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