

Linking the BC Psychosocial Community Oncology Network

This newsletter is published by the BCCA Provincial Psychosocial Oncology Program for health care professionals in communities throughout British Columbia and the Yukon.



Spring 2018

What's New?

Announcing new staff appointments



New Practice Leader in Vancouver

Melanie McDonald, MSW, RSW has replaced Sarah Sample who retired at the end of January. Melanie, as many of you will know, has been with BC Cancer since 2011.

Melanie has a strong background in individual and family assessment and therapy. She also has experience in supervision, teaching and conducting innovative research. She brings a range of skills and experience in bereavement and hospice care, elder care and mindfulness-based stress reduction to her new role.

She also serves on a number of extra-curricular Boards and Committees including the BC Cancer Sustainability Committee.



New Indigenous Cancer Care Counsellor

Laura Nordin, MSW, is the successful candidate for the Indigenous Cancer Care Counsellor (ICCC) role. Laura joined the

Centre for the North team in 2016 as a casual counsellor in the Patient and Family Counselling Department (PFC) and since April 2017 has filled the ICCC role on an interim basis.

Laura completed a Master's Degree in Social Work at the University of Northern British Columbia. Laura's background includes working as a Guardianship Social Worker with Carrier Sekani Family Services and working in the First Nations communities of Nadleh Whu'ten and

Stella'ten. She has also worked at Intersect Family Services as a Child, Youth, and Family Mental Health Therapist.



New Spiritual Health Practitioner

Jenna Jordison, has joined the Provincial Psychosocial Team in her role as Spiritual Health Practitioner in Vancouver.

Jenna has training and practical experience in Clinical Pastoral Education, and has worked for several years at Vancouver General Hospital as the on-call after hours spiritual care practitioner. She has years of Buddhist Meditation training and has provided education and leadership for meditation practice. She is currently finishing her Master's degree in Theological Studies with a Specialization in Spiritual Care.

This is a temporary two year position that has been made possible through the BC Cancer Foundation Innovations in Clinical Care Fund. It is a PHSA initiative – co-led by Dr. Philip Crowell, the Spiritual Health Leader at Children's and Women and Provincial Psychosocial leadership at BC Cancer (Dr Alan Bates, Heather Rennie). The longer-term goal is to develop a business case for a spiritual health model of care provincially.

Initially, Jenna will work closely with the Vancouver Centre Patient and Family Counselling staff. She will be onsite at the Vancouver Centre on Mondays and Tuesdays. On Wednesdays, Jenna will be focusing on the organizational work necessary to move this initiative forward.

For those interested in learning more about the importance of addressing spiritual health needs as part of whole person care, you are encouraged to take a newly developed course entitled “Spiritual Health- Supporting Person-Centred Care” available on the Learning Hub (<https://learninghub.phsa.ca/Courses/16140>).



First Psychiatry Fellow at BC Cancer

by Dr Alan Bates

We're delighted to welcome back **Dr. Saleh Aldahash** to the Psychiatry team at the Vancouver Centre. Dr. Aldahash

completed 3 months of the first year of his fellowship in Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry with us last year and we've been fortunate to recruit him back for another full year. Dr. Aldahash is from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia where he completed medical school and residency. Following his training, he joined the Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry team at King Faisal Specialist Hospital in Riyadh, home of the largest cancer facility in the Gulf region. Dr. Aldahash brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from Riyadh and seeks to gain an international perspective on our field. I'm extremely pleased that our patients will benefit from his skill, diligence, and compassion while he furthers his training in psycho-oncology here at BC Cancer.

New BC Cancer Supportive Care Study

By Sara Camano

Recently BC Cancer changed its organizational structure to a “provincially planned and regionally delivered” model. This change provides an opportunity for supportive cancer ¹care services to be integrated under one professional practice umbrella for planning, evaluation, and quality improvement purposes. This new structure also provides an opportunity to study the BC Cancer supportive cancer care services with patient/family involvement.

The goal of the study is learn what opportunities exist to enhance the patient experience while meeting the physical,

¹ Supportive Care describes all the health care services cancer patients and their families need beyond anticancer medical, surgical, and radiation interventions. It is defined as the provision of the necessary services for those living with or affected by cancer to meet all of their needs (physical, emotional, social, psychological, cultural, informational, spiritual and practical). (M. I. Fitch, 2008).

emotional, and spiritual needs of patients. We believe that making a profound difference in the lives of others is our legacy.²Our aim is to ensure that patients get the right care, at the right time, by the right team and in the right place. ³

The key work involved in this study includes learning from others (Interviews with national & International cancer organizations), learning from within (staff experience survey, and, Patient/family focus groups) and learning from the literature (best practice/scoping literature review).

An advisory committee has been formed and includes representation from BC Cancer operations, medicine, nursing, and supportive cancer care, First Nations Health Authority, and a patient/family representative. It is anticipated that this work will be completed in the Fall 2018.

New Support Group Pilot Program – LEAF Clinic

By Sharon Paulse, MSW, RSW, Bronwyn Barrett, MSW, RSW

The Late Effects, Assessment and Follow-up (LEAF) Clinic was established by BC Cancer to address the medical and psychosocial needs of Adult Childhood Cancer Survivors (ACCS). ACCS face an 80% chance of significant health complications and health risks due to their past cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Common psychosocial issues among ACCS include:

- altered sleep patterns and fatigue
- increased anxiety and depression
- social isolation and interpersonal relationship concerns
- less likely to be partnered or in a long term relationship
- infertility
- sexual dysfunction
- negative body image
- decreased health-related quality of life
- smoking
- alcohol use
- low educational attainment

² PHSA vision

³ Government of Western Australia, Department of Health (2012)

- low household income
- unemployment
- less likely to achieve independent living

Many ACCS patients have expressed feelings of loneliness and an inability to make and keep friends. In response to requests from patients for peer connection and support, LEAF Clinic counsellors Bronwyn Barrett and Sharon Paulse facilitated a pilot support group over three evenings in the Fall of 2017.

The objectives of the social support group were to:

- Promote biopsychosocial well-being through social, recreational and educational activities
- Create a comfortable atmosphere for social engagement and skill development
- Reduce social isolation through peer contact
- Offer educational materials and programs, according to requests of participants
- Promote increased community inclusion by introducing community resources

We held the group once a month, for three sessions in October, November and December, 2017. Over the three evenings, we offered “ice breaker” activities, games, art therapy, and informal opportunities for participants to connect and share experiences. We had anticipated between 8 – 12 participants to attend, and we were very pleased to have an excellent participation rate of 19 patients or so each session. There were approximately 1/3 male and 2/3 female participants, ranging in age from early 20s – late 40s. At each planning step, patients were involved in shaping the group topics and themes.

The biggest challenge was to find a group meeting space that was available in the evening, wheelchair accessible, large enough for the group and didn’t feel or smell too clinical, as some participants experience post-traumatic stress symptoms in the hospital environment.

One interesting reflection was the diversity among the participants in terms of cancer diagnoses, socio-economic status and cognitive and physical abilities. Many participants are survivors of brain tumours and cranial radiation. Despite the various life experiences of the group members, and diverse challenges with late effects, there was a profound feeling of respect and peer support among the participants. We received positive feedback from the

group participants about the opportunity to connect with other survivors. Participants reported that it was important for them to be in a safe, inclusive space meeting others with similar experiences or similar diagnoses. For some participants this was the very first time they met other survivors of childhood cancer. At each meeting the desire to interact with other survivors was paramount.

Some of the feedback we received from participants:

“Having a safe space to be a cancer survivor amongst cancer survivors: having/being labelled with others of the same label = disappearing label.”

“Talking to each other on equal ground.”

“Meeting people that have gone through the same thing. Getting reconnected with people.”

“Meeting others with similar childhood cancers and making connections.”

“That I could get together with other survivors. They know and understand what I've been through.”

Based on the success of this initial pilot, we are now planning for the continuation of this LEAF psychosocial program. On February 1st we facilitated a discussion on “healthy sleep habits.” For the March 1st meeting, participants requested a discussion of issues related to stress and anxiety, such as coping with medical procedures, and communicating with others who do not understand the survivorship experience. Moving forward, we plan to continue to host 6-8 informal evening sessions per year, with rotating themes and activities. We also hope to offer a full day education session. With ongoing positive feedback from ACCS participants, we realize how very crucial this program is.

Psychosocial Oncology Pioneer Passes

Jimmie Holland, a founder of the field of psycho-oncology, died on December 24 at the age of 89. She was a pioneer in the truest sense. With colleagues, she established a full-time Psychiatry Service at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) in 1977 - the first of its kind in the field of oncology - and served as its Chief from then until 1996. She then became Chair of the newly formed Department of Psychiatry and served in that role until 2003. Both programs trained generations of psychiatrists and psychologists in the emotional needs of people with cancer.

For more than 40 years, Jimmie made an essential question - "How do people with cancer feel?" - the center of her work. During her years at Mount Sinai Medical Center, she created the nation's largest training and research program in psycho-oncology. Throughout her career, Jimmie conducted important research about how battles with cancer affect the mind. She helped establish important insights on the best way to treat depression during cancer treatment and to treat anxiety in those who have survived.

In 1984, she produced for MSK the first-ever syllabus on psycho-oncology and, in 1989, was senior editor of the first textbook on the subject. The BC Cancer Library catalogue at <http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/our-services/services/library> includes several of her books.

It's A Snow Day - Friday March 9, 2018 Mount Seymour
[Grab your mittens and join the cause!](#)



To learn more about this event go to www.itsasnowday.ca



This will be the third year that Prostate Cancer BC has partnered with Mount Seymour. Skiers and snowboarders head up the mountain to compete for prizes and bragging rights. The day is followed with a silent auction and party.

Prostate Cancer is the number one cancer and the third cause of cancer deaths in men. All money raised at this event stays in British Columbia to support research, education and survivorship programs for men and their families.

BC Cancer Long-term Service Recognition

The following staff members are currently working in the BC Cancer Psychosocial Program. The years of service reflect how long they have been PHSA employees.



40 years - Diana Haas, Secretary, Vancouver Centre



30 years – Sharon Paulse, Counsellor, LEAF Program



30 years – Helen Wong, Counsellor, Vancouver Island Centre

25 years:

- Sarah Sample, newly retired, Practice Leader, Vancouver Centre
- Catherine Traer-Martinez, Counsellor, Vancouver Island Centre

15 years:

- Fred Crawford, Counsellor, Vancouver Centre
- Pauline Lee, Administrative Coordinator, Psychosocial Oncology Program

10 years:

- Nancy Payeur, Practice Leader, Vancouver Island Centre
- Neena Sunner, Secretary, Psychiatry & Psychosocial Oncology

5 years:

- Kayla Bajic, Counsellor, Centre for the North
- Valentina Mendoza, Psychiatrist, Vancouver Centre
- Amy Rappaport, Counsellor, Vancouver Centre
- Kristen Renwick Johnson, Counsellor, Centre for the Southern Interior



Vancouver Centre Open House



On January 9th the Patient & Family Counselling & Psychiatry teams at Vancouver Centre hosted an open house to celebrate the completion of their office renovations. Pictured here (left to right) are some

of the staff: Melanie McDonald, Paula Myers, Sarah Sample, Amy Rappaport, and Maureen Parkinson.



Relaxation audio now available to stream or download on your mobile device

A SoundCloud page features relaxation audio content produced by BC Cancer. Anyone, including health care workers, can now conveniently listen to your favourite Mindfulness & Meditation and Relaxation & Guided Imagery tracks using your mobile device or computer. Listening choices include:

- Use the link and listen from your desktop or mobile browser
<https://soundcloud.com/phsabc>
- Download the free SoundCloud app on your mobile device (search your App Store)
 - Audio streaming requires an internet connection
 - To download in mp3 format, first create an account, then navigate to an individual track, click “more”. And select “download”

Changes to Canadian Cancer Society’s (CCS) Travel Treatment Fund

Two changes come into effect March 1, 2018.

1. The financial eligibility criteria will be based on Statistics Canada’s 2016 low pre-tax income cut-offs. Gross annual income can be found on line 150 on a Revenue Canada Notice of Assessment. **Clients must submit their most recent Notice of Assessment for all members of the family unit over 18 years old living in the same residence.** If the financial situation of the patient has changed during the year, proof of current income for the last three months (Employment Insurance documents, pay slips, or a bank statement) will be accepted to confirm eligibility.

2. The distance eligibility and travel allowances have been adjusted as outlined below. Travel is based on the distance between the patient’s home and the treatment centre (one-way):

1 to 10 km*	\$135
11 to 20 km*	\$220
21 to 30 km*	\$325
31 to 50 km*	\$380
51 to 70 km*	\$435
71 to 200 km*	\$490
201 to 300 km**	\$600
301 to 500 km**	\$700
More than 500 km**	\$750

*To be eligible for the travel allowance, **patients must have to travel at least ten times per year** for treatments and other cancer-related procedures.

**If a patient needs to travel more than 200 km from home for treatment they are eligible even if fewer than 10 trips are required.



Educational Opportunities:

Psychosocial Oncology Rounds

These rounds occur the 3RD Thursday of the month.



To call in and listen refer to the rounds flyer for the number and passcode.

We recognize that the demands of your work may make it difficult for you to attend these rounds in person or by video link. Unfortunately, we don't have the resources to create and post videos of our monthly Psychosocial Oncology Rounds, at this time.

However, presentation materials are, for the most part, posted online, on the Provincial Health Services Agency (PHSA) Learning Hub, <http://learninghub.phsa.ca> under Psychosocial Oncology Rounds where you can view PowerPoints and/or handouts during (if you are calling in) or after the presentation. Please note you may not see all presentations on this site because some presenters do not give us permission to share their slides. All presentation materials that are posted, are NOT TO BE COPIED WITHOUT PERMISSION of author/s.

You must have a Learning Hub account to access rounds presentation materials. Once you have an account you can search for Psychosocial Oncology Rounds or follow this link: <http://learninghub.phsa.ca/moodle/course/view.php?id=247>

To access the PHSA Learning Hub

If you are a PHSA employee, to gain access to the rounds you can access your Learning Hub account with your Employee ID number, then log in and search for 'Psychosocial Oncology Rounds' to see a list of presentations.

If you do not have an employee number, follow the steps below to create an Affiliate Account which will give you limited access to the Learning Hub.

1. Go to <https://learninghub.phsa.ca/>
2. Click Sign Up for an Account
3. Read agreement and click I Agree
4. Select appropriate account type
- Affiliate account
5. Follow the step by step account creation process.
6. Contact eshearer@bccancer.bc.ca to request to be enrolled into the Psychosocial Rounds section of the Learning Hub.

MARCH 15, noon -1pm



Let's talk about Employment Insurance caregiving benefits

Presenter: Shelley Pennington, Cancer Care Social Worker and a representative from Service Canada.

When a cancer patient needs care and support at home, family members or friends often step up to help. In order to provide care and support, it may be necessary for the caregiver to stop working which can add to financial burden. It is important for healthcare professionals to know the latest about new and enhanced government programs. Let's talk with a knowledgeable Service Canada representative who will inform us about eligibility criteria, how different EI benefits work together and answer questions about caregiver benefits.

APRIL 19, noon -1pm



Psychotherapy options for advanced cancer: Meaning Centered Psychotherapy, Managing Cancer and Living Meaningfully (CALM), and Dignity Therapy

*Presenter: Alan Bates, MD, PhD, FRCPC
Provincial Practice Leader for Psychiatry BC Cancer*

Dr Alan Bates will present a brief introduction to existential distress before outlining the core aspects of Meaning Centered Psychotherapy, Managing Cancer and Living Meaningfully (CALM), and Dignity Therapy. Discussion of the relative strengths and weaknesses of each approach is encouraged. Audience impression of and experience with each therapy will help shape BC Cancer's future involvement in research and education regarding psychotherapy for advanced cancer.

MAY 17, noon -1pm

Beyond GLBTQ: Sexual and/or Gender Minority Populations, Cultural Competency and Cancer Health and Treatment

Presenter: Dr. Mary K. Bryson, Senior Associate Dean, Administration, Faculty Affairs & Innovation, Faculty of Education and Professor, Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED), Faculty of Education The University of British Columbia

More details to follow.

JUNE 21, noon -1pm

Introducing New Provincial Initiatives: Supportive Care Study, Late Effects, Assessment and Follow up (LEAF) Clinic, Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Cancer Program, Spiritual Health Practitioner and Indigenous Cancer Care Counsellor

Panel of Presenters: Heather Rennie, Avril Ullett, Jenna Jordison, Laura Nordin and other staff members

More details to follow.

IPODE
Continuing Education Courses
 Register for courses online at www.ipode.ca.
 For more information contact Natasha Boutilier:
Natasha.Boutilier@cdha.nshealth.ca
 or 902-473-6618.

March
 National Social Work Month
 2nd week of March is Social Work Week
 National Colorectal Awareness Month

April
 Daffodil Days – Cancer Awareness Month

May
 Melanoma Awareness Month

June
 National Survivorship Day

Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology Conference in Toronto - May 30 - June 1, 2018

Don't miss this opportunity to meet with leaders in the field of psychosocial oncology and colleagues from across Canada. Go to www.capo.ca to register.



Princess Margaret Cancer Centre UHN



Information & Resources:

New free, online tool helps caregivers support children in times of grief

KidsGrief.ca

Home / Français Text Size:

About | Resources

Talking with **Kids & teens** about dying and death

When someone important to a child is dying or has died, families struggle with what to tell children, when to share information and how to address tough subjects like should

children be at the bedside of someone who is dying and what is cremation.

To mark the First Annual National Bereavement Day in Canada (November 21, 2017), a new national initiative by the Canadian Virtual Hospice (with funding from the Canadian Internet Registration Authority and Hope & Cope) was launched to help parents, guardians and caregivers with a difficult challenge: talking with children about dying and death. KidsGrief.ca is a free, bilingual online resource that addresses these and other topics in a straightforward, practical way providing strategies, talking points and video clips of families sharing personal stories.

KidsGrief.ca consists of three learning modules written by grief experts. People can easily navigate the modules to find the information they need. Topics include: words, phrases and concepts to use and what to avoid; responding to difficult concepts such as suicide, medical assistance in dying and cremation; preparing children for funerals, and other ceremonies; “teachable moments” including pet death and talking about tragic world events; and how to support grieving children.

Parents and caregivers often turn to health providers and educators for help in these situations. Now they have an accessible resource they can use.

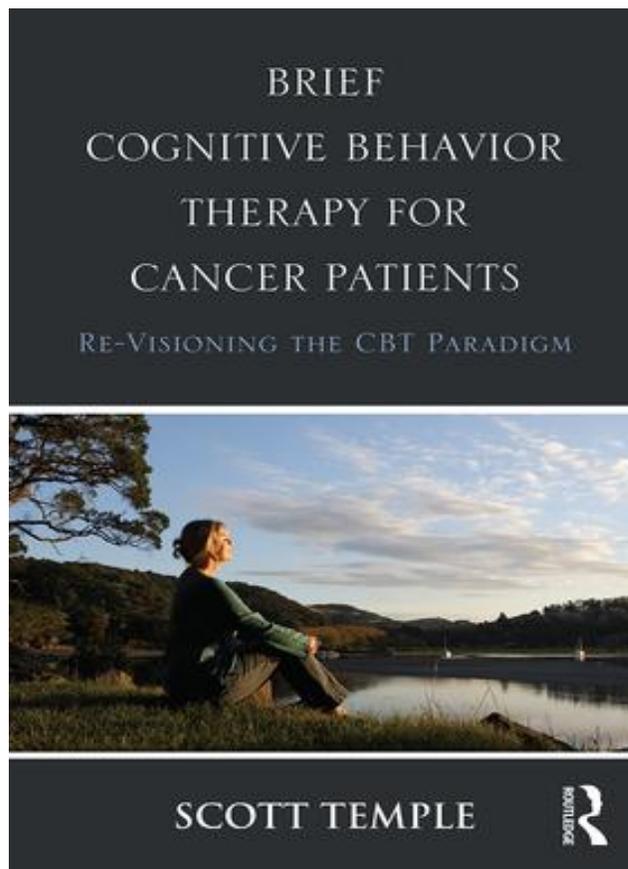
KidsGrief.ca builds on MyGrief.ca, an online resource for grieving adults launched by the Canadian Virtual Hospice in 2016, with funding by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer For more information, email: Marissa@virtualhospice.ca

Updated Handout for Professionals

Download this free handout about [BC Cancer Support Resources](#) for oncology patients. It offers information on travel to cancer center, financial assistance and other helpful information and support that patients can access online or at their cancer center.

New eBook

1st Edition, published 6 February 2017, New York, Imprint Routledge, 232 pages, ISBN 9781317368090
Available through the BC Cancer Library



If you would like to submit an article, or ask a question, please contact the Community Education Coordinator eshearer@bccancer.bca.ca. Final decisions about the content of this newsletter are made by the Editorial Board. Content of articles in this newsletter represent the views of the named authors and do not necessarily represent the position of BCCA, PHSA or any other organization.



Deadline for submission for the spring newsletter is June 1st, 2018. Send information to eshearer@bccancer.bc.ca.