

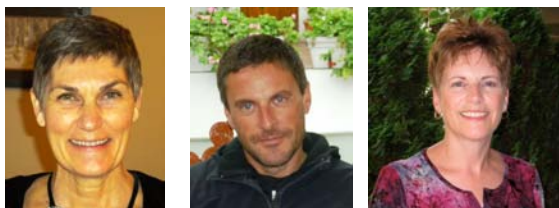


## Linking the BC Psychosocial Community Oncology Network

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

### What's New

#### Good grief - shifting from treatment to companionship



By (left to right) Myrna Tracy, R.S.W., David Greenshields, R.S.W & Arlene Elliot, R.C.C.

*“Do not be too eager to take away someone's suffering, when this may be their only path to liberation.” ~Alan Wolfelt*

In an upcoming psychosocial rounds (April, 2015), three PFC staff (pictured above) will highlight lessons learned in a training workshop by Dr. Alan Wolfelt. Wolfelt invites psychosocial oncology professionals to let go of the need to take away others' pain when they have experienced the death of a loved one and, instead, to create the space and conditions to companion them through their experience. In other words, the bereaved person is supported to travel “backwards and downwards”, before moving “forward and upwards”.

In this place, we forego our role as experts and leaders, allowing ourselves to be guided and to be compassionately present and attentively curious. A place where we relinquish

control and are fully present to the other's experience, no matter how confusing and disordered it might be. As Alan reminds us,

*“Grief is not an illness to be recovered from. We do not return to ‘normal’. Rather, we are forever transformed by it”.*

#### Memory and Attention Adaptation Training (MAAT)

Memory and Attention Adaptation Training (MAAT) is a brief behavioural skills program developed for cancer survivors who self-report problems with attention and memory associated with cancer-related chemotherapy.

The MAAT Program was developed by health psychologist, Robert J. Ferguson, Ph.D. and Karen Lee Gillock, Ph.D. It includes 8 weekly facilitated group sessions in which patients learn strategies to help them cope with and manage problems of memory and attention in everyday life.

Three groups have been offered at two different cancer centres. Overall, those who attended have reported that they find the group very helpful and have

appreciated the knowledge they have gained and the opportunities to share with others who face similar challenges.

#### What do patients say?

- "It helped to have a really relaxed atmosphere and flexible format with the opportunity to practice certain skills in class."
- "I have learned that multitasking no longer works for me. I need to schedule it in to places."
- "I am now more self aware of myself and surroundings that effect me, positive and negative"

The next group will be offered at the Vancouver Centre from January 19<sup>th</sup> to March 16, 2015. The MAAT group is suitable for those who:

- ✓ **have had a decline in memory and attention since chemotherapy**
- ✓ **have had chemotherapy in the last two years**
- ✓ **have finished chemotherapy**
- ✓ **have no other medical condition that affects memory and attention** (for example Alzheimer's, brain injury, learning disability etc)
- ✓ **are able to attend 8 sessions** from January 19<sup>th</sup> – March 16, 2015

Registration: Patient and Family Counselling, Vancouver Centre, 604-877-6000 extension 67-2194.

### Y-ACT- Yoga in Adult Cancer Trial

There is an increasing interest by cancer patients in complimentary therapies and interventions, However, more research is needed to determine outcomes of these interventions. Melanie McDonald (Vancouver Centre, PFC) and Marcy McCall McBain (University of Oxford PHD student) collaborated in a yoga research study (Summer, 2014). The purpose of the study was to determine the

feasibility of 3 types of yoga interventions to improve the quality of life in adult cancer patients. Fifteen participants were recruited for this pilot research study. The initial results are encouraging. Next steps include a larger study with more participants to determine efficacy.

### New Psychiatry Staff at the BC Cancer Agency

We have recently hired new psychiatrists to join our Regional teams. Our Psychiatry team includes:

**Abbotsford** – Dr. Janice Jura has joined Dr. Norma Barbieri. She previously worked at Abbotsford Hospital and in Ontario.

**Kelowna** – Dr. Lidia Schuster continues to provide psychiatric services.

**Prince George** – Dr. Ejike Udumaga started on November 19<sup>th</sup>. He also is a Consultant Psychiatrist with Mental Health & Addictions Services, Prince George, Northern Health Authority.

**Surrey** – Dr. Steve Simpson joined us in 2012. He is on the Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology Board as a Director representing Psychiatry. Some of you will also know him because of his work with Tom Baker Cancer Centre.

**Vancouver** – Dr. Alan Bates started on November 21<sup>st</sup>. He recently completed a Fellowship in Psychosomatic Medicine and Psycho-oncology at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre and Weill Cornell Medical College in New York. He will also be working at St Paul's Hospital.

**Dr. Valentina Mendoza** joined us in 2012 and also works at St. Paul's Hospital.

**Dr. Elaine Drysdale** and **Dr. Andrea Grabovac** continue to provide psychiatric services.

**Victoria** –Dr. Diana Ingram and Dr. David Swan continue to provide psychiatric services.

## Program Updates

**CancerChatCanada** is excited to pilot an educational online group for cancer patients with insomnia. The “Sleeping Well with Cancer and Beyond” course is 6 weeks in duration and will help participants develop an individualized sleep program. The program is based on the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy and encourages participants to take an active approach to changing their sleeping habits. Our first pilot group offered to Alberta residents was a success – every participant improved their sleep! We look forward to offering our first national group in the New Year.

**CancerChatCanada** is also partnering with Rethink Breast Cancer to offer two online support groups for young women with metastatic breast cancer. Participants from across Canada will meet in an online chat room to share common experiences and learn skills for coping with cancer. Other online support groups offered in the New Year include those for cancer survivors, patients with advanced cancer, and caregivers.

**If you are aware of patients or caregivers** that would benefit from one of our online support groups or educational courses, please direct them to register on our website at [www.cancerchatcanada.ca](http://www.cancerchatcanada.ca), email us at [cancerchatcanada@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:cancerchatcanada@bccancer.bc.ca), or call us at 1-877-547-3777 ext. 645234.

## Art Therapy Program Update

The Art Therapy Program at BCCA experienced a growth spurt during 2014. Several new arts-based groups for patients were piloted. In the Spring, we offered **two groups for Chinese-speaking patients** (one in Mandarin and one in Cantonese, co-facilitated by counselor Sandy Kwong and art therapist Cathie Dunlop) at the VCC. In the Fall, we piloted an **arts-based support group for patients diagnosed with a primary brain tumour** (co-facilitated by counselor Amy Rappaport and art therapist Cathie Dunlop)

at the request of the Patient and Family Advisory Council (six week series held at VCC and one day sessions held at VIC). Additionally, we had the opportunity to offer the Expressive Arts Studio: A Workshop Series for Young Adults with Cancer. This group was made possible by a charitable donation. The **Expressive Arts Studio** enabled us to invite guest artists from the community to facilitate a studio learning experience featuring a variety of creative modalities: poetry, sculpture, photography, painting, songwriting and African drumming. These new art-based programs occurred alongside the ongoing Children’s Groups, the arts-based support group for young adults with cancer, and the development of a new web resource (FACTS4Teens).



We are excited about another phase of growth this coming year. In January 2015, Sara Prins Hankinson will be returning after her year of maternity leave and together with Cathie Dunlop (who will be staying on at BCCA as a Casual Art Therapist) will be continuing with the new groups from 2014 and adding more arts-based support groups for patients, including online groups, drop-in groups and more site-specific groups such as a group for head and neck cancer patients. Thank you everyone for your support of the Art Therapy Program!

## Art Therapy Groups for Chinese-speaking cancer patients

Art-making can be a powerful tool in a patient’s cancer journey. Expressing creatively through art can be a way to build resiliency and help with coping. BC Cancer Agency’s Patient & Family Counselling Services (PFC)

has provided the Art Therapy Program for cancer patients for many years. Recently, two Art Therapy Groups for Chinese-speaking cancer patients were piloted. The goals of these groups were to test the feasibility of implementing Art Therapy in the Chinese language, to explore the interest of Chinese-speaking patients to an arts-based support group format, and to explore art therapy as a healing modality.



Each group consisted of four 2-hour sessions. They were held at the BCCA's Vancouver Centre and co-facilitated by Sandy Kwong, Chinese-speaking Social Worker and Dr. Cathie Dunlop, Art Therapist. The Cantonese group had 15 participants, and the Mandarin group had 9 participants. Different art media were used, including: Zen tangle, clay, multi-media, doodle art, and mandalas. Both groups were rated positively by the Chinese patients. Many of them shared that they found a safe space to express their inner feelings through art making. It also helped them release their stress, learn new tools to explore their feelings and inspired them to try new things in their daily living. Given the positive feedback, PFC plans to offer the Art Therapy Groups for Chinese Cancer Patients in the Spring and Fall of 2015. Please stay tuned for more details, and refers cancer patients to these groups.

**Quotes from participants:**

- *Under no pressure, I can express my feelings and release my inner world and share with others.*
- *It was enriching and liberating for me. Enriching because through the ways of art therapy, art media etc. I learned about new things that I haven't known before.*

- *Liberating because I learned to cast off some negatives that were built up in me due to my illness. I was sensitized about them and was able to break off some unnecessary bonds.*
- *This is a very worthwhile experience for me for it helps me rebuild my own identity in a new way. It gives me space to be myself in spite of my illness. It gives me a new freedom to express my emotions: frustration, anger, appreciation and love.*



## Financial Information for Cancer Patients



**COMING SOON – 2015**  
 Updated version of this pamphlet will be on the BC Cancer website

## Educational Opportunities:

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

### Psychosocial Rounds

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month

**Thursday January 15<sup>th</sup>, noon-1pm**

#### **When Counting Sheep is Not Enough: Cancer Chat Canada Pilots A Cognitive Behavioral Educational Group for “Sleeping Well With Cancer And Beyond”**

Presenter - Heather Rennie, M.A., M.Sc (BC Cancer Agency)

Insomnia is very common- about 10% of North American adults report having serious insomnia. For cancer patients, the rate is even higher: 30-50% report sleep problems. The BC Cancer Agency has been screening patients at their initial appointment using the Canadian Problem Checklist for the past two years, and sleep is consistently reported as one of the top three problems for cancer patients. The gold standard intervention for sleep problems is a cognitive behavioral approach.

The BC Cancer Agency hosts a program called Cancer Chat Canada (CCC), a pan- Canadian initiative that offers professionally facilitated online support groups to cancer patients and their family. CCC recently piloted an online cognitive behavioral educational group to address sleep problems. This six- week course relies heavily on a self-management approach. Participants read a manual, develop an individualized sleep plan, and track daily progress on a sleep diary. Results from the pilot group will be discussed, including: key elements of the program, modifications to offer this program in an online format, participants’ demographics, participants’ group experience, and efficacy of the program in addressing sleep problems.

The use of technology to offer educational groups and self-management tools to cancer patients is promising. Using an online modality increases access, and reach for those patients who cannot access face- to- face supports.

**Thursday February 19<sup>th</sup>, noon-1pm**

#### **Changes to the Adult Guardianship Act**

Presenter - Alison Leaney, Provincial Coordinator, Vulnerable Adults Community Response Services to Adults, Public Guardian and Trustee

**Thursday March 19<sup>th</sup>, noon-1pm**

**To be announced ...**

**Thursday April 16<sup>th</sup>, noon-1pm**

#### **Good grief - shifting from treatment to companionship**

Presenters - Myrna Tracy, R.S.W., Arlene Elliot, R.C.C. & David Greenshields, R.S.W.

Please see the article featured on the first page of this newsletter.

*\* Please note that rooms in all 6 BC Cancer Agency Centers are video linked to these rounds. If you cannot access one of our centers, for requests to video link to BCCA Rounds or other BCCA events, please send all enquiries to [Telehealth@phsa.ca](mailto:Telehealth@phsa.ca).*

*For bridge support, call our service desk for assistance: 1-866-966-4347, press ‘1’.*

### **IPODE Continuing Education Courses**

Registration for courses online through the website [www.ipode.ca](http://www.ipode.ca).

For more information contact  
Natasha Boutilier: [Natasha.Boutilier@cdha.nshealth.ca](mailto:Natasha.Boutilier@cdha.nshealth.ca)  
or  
902-473-6618.

## Information & Resources:

### Speak Up: Advance Care Planning Toolkit

for Cancer Patients, Families & Professionals

<http://www.advancecareplanning.ca/community-organizations/download-the-speak-up-campaign-kit/bc-cancer-toolkit.aspx>

- A variety of materials from the Canadian Hospice and Palliative Care Association
- Fact sheets and tools for professionals and patients around Advance Care Planning.
- Advance Care Planning for Oncology Professionals Booklet

### Health Care Providers' Guide To Consent To Health Care

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2011/health-care-providers'-guide-to-consent-to-health-care.pdf>

### Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association

<http://www.chpca.net/professionals.aspx>

### Doctors of BC. It's Time to Talk: Advance Care Planning in BC, March 2014

<https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/working-change/health-policy/policy-papers>

### Virtual Hospice has a new Video for Professionals

#### ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOUR, COMPASSION, DIALOGUE

Dr. Harvey Max Chochinov and the Manitoba Palliative Care Research Unit have produced a video called [The ABCDs of Dignity in Care](#), funded by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. Through personal stories, the video shows healthcare providers how attitude, behaviour, compassion and dialogue can make the difference in a person's care experience.

### Cancer Myths

A vast amount of information about cancer is available online and through other sources. Unfortunately, some of it can be misleading or inaccurate.



<http://www.cancer.net/all-about-cancer/cancernet-feature-articles/cancer-basics/cancer-myths>

### Financial Resources for Cancer Patients

- **Consumer Affairs** is offering some information and tools to help people deal with debt. <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/oca-bc.nsf/eng/home>



- **Canada Revenue Agency** has produced some videos including tax measures for people with disabilities.

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/vdglly/ndvdl/srs-txmsrs-pwd-eng.html?clp=ndvdl/srs-txmsrs-pwd1-eng&fmt=mp4>



If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please contact Elaine Shearer at [eshearer@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:eshearer@bccancer.bc.ca)  
Deadlines for submission are: March 1<sup>st</sup>, June 1<sup>st</sup>, September 1<sup>st</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>.