

Participatory Research Fund Project Development of a Wellness & Resilience Program for Cancer Centre Staff

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Overview:

The cancer care setting is a high stress work environment due to, the life-and-death nature of cancer diagnosis and treatment; the necessity of providing care for the patient, their family, and social support system; the unpredictable and critical nature of patient needs and demands on time and attention within the work shift; on-going COVID-19 complications impacting staffing levels and functions; and so forth. Research and anecdotal evidence indicate that medical and patient support staff experiencing stress on the job and lack good support for self-care which can have a negative impact on the efficiency and quality of service and care provided to patients and family. Further, this impacts overall health and long-term wellbeing of the staff members. Supporting staff health and wellbeing, reduce burnout, and turnover is crucial to ensure healthcare costs and maintain high quality care.

Addressing stress-management and developing resiliency helps to reduce the impact of stress on oncology staff, however the nature of the cancer treatment presents numerous challenges that make this difficult. Arranging for staff release while maintaining needed treatment coverage, and everyone's level of comfort in switching between a professional role with other-focus and a personal role with self-focus within the work environment. Practicing stress-management and developing resiliency are skills that medical and patient support staff likely to encourage patients to learn. Helping staff to develop and practice these skills for themselves will also assist them in effectively teaching and supporting patients in gaining competence with these skills, leading to better health and well-being for staff and patients.

Aim and objectives:

We aim to creatively explore the mechanisms by which a staff resiliency program can be established in the cancer care environment in a manner that is accessible and effective for all staff without disrupting the treatment environment and patient care needs. This exploration has been undertaken by gathering survey responses and interviewing cancer care team staff representative of various roles and representative of each the healthcare system and to ensure various stakeholders are included in identifying strategies for the best methods of implementing such a program.

Funding of £7,275 was used for:

- PPIE travel, food, beverage, and gift card costs
- Post-doc research assistant
- PI travel costs to each cancer centre location



Do you want to know more or be involved?

Stakeholders involved:

- . Two cancer treatment centres serve as the focus for this PPIE design work including:
 - Cambridge University Hospital Cancer Centre
 - Parkview Parknett Family Cancer Institute, Fort Wayne, IN (US).

Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement elements:

Participant engagement in completing a survey and interviews. Sample questions include:

- What do you see as challenges that make it difficult for the healthcare organization/system to offer these types of programs? *Circle all that apply.*
 - ☐ Administrative willingness
 - ☐ Administrative support
 - ☐ Funding
 - ☐ Staff scheduling
 - ☐ Supervisor buy-in
 - ☐ Flexibility within treatment teams
 - ☐ Other: _____
- What are the challenges that you would face personally if you wanted to participate in a workplace wellness program? *Circle all that apply.*
 - ☐ Concern about coverage for patient care
 - ☐ Comfort with using work time for personal care
 - ☐ Concern about impact on evaluations of job performance
 - ☐ Difficulty “changing hats” between professional & personal roles
 - ☐ Concerns disclosing information about personal wellbeing
 - ☐ Other: _____
- Indicate what you feel is needed for or within the healthcare organization/system to solve the challenges in implementation of workplace wellness programming. *Circle all that apply.*
 - ☐ Increased research evidence of the value of wellness programming
 - ☐ Administrative support

Indicate specifically: _____

 - ☐ Funding
 - ☐ Program funding
 - ☐ Coverage funding
 - ☐ Other funding, specifically:
 - ☐ Changes in staff scheduling
 - ☐ Supervisor support for participation
 - ☐ Flexibility within teams for coverage
 - ☐ Other: _____

Research outcomes:

Survey completion and interviews are currently underway.



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