

Supportive Services Update

May 2024

Welcome to the May edition of the Supportive Services Update.

Mental Health Awareness week is May 6-12. The theme this year is "A Call to be Kind". In this issue, we share how compassion towards yourself and others can improve your mental health.

May also has several cancer awareness themes which we wish to acknowledge:

Bladder Cancer Awareness Month
Brain Tumour Awareness Month
Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month

Finally, we celebrate National Nursing Week from May 6-12. Every day, the nurses with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency provide patients and their families with safe, skilled and compassionate care through some of the most challenging times of their lives. We thank them for their support and dedication.

Continue reading for further information about some of the topics above and more!

If you have suggestions for future newsletter issues, don't hesitate to contact us:

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Upcoming Groups

One Breath Anticipatory Grief Group Offered at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre

One Breath is a 5 week anticipatory grief group offered to patients and/or loved ones. The group will allow participants to discuss and share their thoughts and feelings surrounding a terminal illness. We will reflect on topics such as coping strategies, legacy work, self-care, forgiveness, and creating moments of connection.

The next group is being offered in Regina starting May 17 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Facilitators are LaRae Beebe and Marlene Brenzil.

To learn more or to register, call 306-766-2973.

What is Anticipatory Grief?

Anticipatory grief can carry many of the symptoms of regular grief: sadness, anger, isolation, forgetfulness, and depression. These complicated emotions are often coupled with the exhaustion that comes with being a caregiver or the stress of being left alone when someone goes to war or is battling addiction.

We are aware of the looming death and accepting it will come, which can bring an overwhelming anxiety and dread. More than that, in advance of a death we grieve the loss of a person's abilities and independence, their loss of cognition, a loss of hope, loss of future dreams, loss of stability and security, loss of their identity and our own, and countless other losses. This grief is not just about accepting the future death, but of the many losses already occurring as an illness progresses.

Source: <https://whatsyourgrief.com/anticipatory-grief/>

**"The difference
between
anticipatory grief
and bereavement
is just one breath"**

- Kelly Phillips Palliative
Care Coordinator



Stepping Stones - A Walking Group Offered at the Saskatoon Cancer Centre

Research shows that walking and being in nature can help increase your mood and overall wellbeing. Walking with others can boost your motivation and help create connections to nature and others who are also living with cancer. During the warmer months the Saskatoon Cancer Centre offers a 4 week walking group. This group is open to anyone with a cancer diagnosis, and we encourage everyone to walk at their own pace.

Come and join our facilitators Serena and Dana for a weekly 'walk and talk' on Thursday's from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m in May and June. Classes are held at Queen's House of Retreat in Saskatoon.

If you have questions or want to register for this group please call 306-655-6811.

"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks"

- John Muir



Mental Health Week: May 6-12, 2024

A Call To Be Kind: Because Compassion Connects Us All

We all have the capacity to be compassionate, and we know that doing so can make an enormous difference. This year's Mental Health Week is centered on the healing power of compassion. Compelling scientific evidence suggests that giving compassion, receiving compassion, and allowing ourselves to experience self-compassion are all very beneficial to our mental health. (Source: <https://cmha.ca/mental-health-week/toolkits/>)

Giving Compassion

Eases Depression

When we show compassion through caring, and by expressing feelings of kindness, it can have a positive impact on our mood and lift feelings of depression.

A Spike in Happiness

According to researchers, it feels as good to give compassion as it is to receive it. The act of "giving compassion" is closely connected to the release of oxytocin, a feel-good hormone. Giving appears to be equally if not more pleasurable than receiving.

A Cascade of Kindness

A domino effect can also happen when we help others, because witnessing acts of compassion can encourage others to show compassion too. This suggests that compassion is contagious.

A Catalyst for Optimism

Giving compassion to others can shift the way we think, making us more positive about things around us.

Getting Compassion

Calming Effects

One theory suggests that when we receive compassion from others, it may help learn to soothe and comfort ourselves when we are facing difficulties. It also helps us regulate distress.

Self-Compassion

Giving Ourselves a Break

When we respond with kindness to our personal shortcomings and failures, rather than with self-critique, we can be more self-accepting. This promotes positive self-esteem and well-being.

Bouncing Back

Self-compassion improves emotional resilience. When we are compassionate with ourselves, we are better equipped to cope with setbacks and failure.

Embracing Self

Practicing self-compassion allows us to have better relationships with ourselves. We have fewer negative self-judgments and more encouraging and caring self-talk.

Reducing Symptoms

Research shows that self-compassion affects the severity of some mental health symptoms and improves quality of life.

Happiness Factor

Self-compassion has also been linked to happiness, optimism, positive mood and to a greater sense of meaning and fulfillment.

For more information about how compassion can improve your mental health, visit the Canadian Mental Health Association at cmha.ca.

Nutrition Topic: Food Safety

Summer is just around the corner and with the warmer weather, many of us head outdoors to enjoy a meal. However, it is important to keep foods safe when enjoying the outdoors. Some cancer treatments can weaken your immune system, which can increase your risk of developing a food borne illness (food poisoning). Here are a few tips to help you stay safe at your next outdoor BBQ or picnic:

1. Avoid high risk foods such as uncooked hot dogs or deli meats, raw or runny egg yolks, raw or undercooked meats, unpasteurized dairy products or fruit juice/cider, soft and semi-soft cheeses, and raw sprouts.
2. Always wash your hands, cooking surfaces, and utensils with soap and hot water before and after handling food, especially raw meat.
3. Wash your fresh fruits and vegetables with drinkable water. You do not need to use anything other than water to wash your fresh produce.
4. Cook your meat to the proper internal temperature. See Safe Cooking Temperatures on the Health Canada Website (<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/food-safety.html>)
5. Throw away any perishable food if it is left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours, or 1 hour if it is a hot summer day.

Remember – Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. When in doubt, throw it out!

People who undergo stem cell transplants are recommended to follow strict food safety practices. Please speak with your dietitian for more details if you have food safety questions.

Recipe: Salmon Patties

Ingredients:

2 cans (213 mL each) canned salmon, drained
2 green onions, thinly sliced
1 tbsp fresh dill, chopped (or 1 tsp dried dill)
½ cup breadcrumbs
¼ cup full-fat mayonnaise
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 egg, beaten
2 tbsp olive oil
Salt and pepper, to taste



Recipe and photo sourced from:
<https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/recipes/a55509/salmon-patties/>

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, add the first 8 ingredients. Season with salt and pepper. Mix well.
2. Form into 5, evenly-sized patties. In a large skillet over medium heat (on stove top or BBQ), heat oil. Cook patties until golden and crispy (3-4 minutes per side). Drain on paper towels.
3. Serve with your choice of burger bun and toppings (e.g. lettuce, tomato, spinach, mayonnaise) with lemon wedges on the side.

Makes 5 servings. Each patty (without bun/toppings) provides 285 calories and 22 g protein.

Benefits of Gardening

At this time of year, many people are eager to get outdoors, enjoy the warmth and start gardening. Many people garden for the beauty of the flowers or the delicious fruits and vegetables. But did you know that gardening has been shown to have a positive impact on both your physical and mental health?

Engaging in gardening activities can provide a low-impact workout that can improve cardiovascular health, flexibility, and strength. Gardening can also be a great stress-reliever and form of therapy. It can give you a sense of accomplishment, reduce anxiety, and increase feelings of well-being. The physical act of gardening, such as digging, planting, and weeding, can be a mindful activity that helps you stay present in the moment and provides a distraction from worries and negative thoughts. Additionally, being outside in nature can be calming and restorative, which can be especially helpful for those dealing with the stress and challenges of cancer treatment.

If you are hesitant to try gardening, start small with a few easy-to-grow plants in a container or raised bed. As you become more comfortable, you can expand your garden and try new activities. Gardening can be a fun and rewarding hobby that can have a positive impact on your overall health and well-being.

But remember, if you plan on spending your days in the garden (or outside in general) it's important to protect yourself from sun exposure. Make sure wear sunscreen, sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat, and a long sleeve shirt to fully protect yourself out in the garden. Take frequent breaks in the shade, drink lots of water and listen to your body and its needs.

Source: <https://www.goingbeyondthepink.org/blog/the-benefits-of-gardening-for-breast-cancer-patients-and-survivors>



In the Library

The Four Things that Matter Most : A Book About Living By Ira Byock

Four simple phrases—"Please forgive me," "I forgive you," "Thank you," and "I love you"—carry enormous power to mend and nurture our relationships and inner lives. These four phrases and the sentiments they convey provide a path to emotional wellbeing, guiding us through interpersonal difficulties to life with integrity and grace.

Newly updated with stories from people who have turned to this life-altering book in their time of need, this motivational teaching about what really matters reminds us how we can honor each relationship every day. Dr. Ira Byock, an international leader in palliative care, explains how we can practice these life-affirming words in our day-to-day lives.



Find more books in our libraries at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre and Saskatoon Cancer Centre!

Allan Blair Cancer Centre Groups and Services

Cancer Transitions Program

A 6 week program for patients who have completed cancer treatment. Issues of survivorship, emotional wellness, nutrition, exercise and moving forward after treatment are addressed.

Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT) Class

For prostate cancer patients starting on ADT and their partners.

Offered on the 4th Thursday of the month.

Writing Group

A 9 week writing group, meeting once weekly to explore through writing the aspects of cancer, treatment and following. Open to cancer patients receiving treatment and completed treatment.

Dignity Therapy Service

A brief intervention designed to help conserve the dying patient's sense of dignity. It gives patients a chance to record the meaningful aspects of their lives and leave something behind that can benefit their loved ones in the future.

Body Image Group

A 6 week course offered once a week which provides you with insight, support, and the tools necessary to guide you on your way to a healthier you.

Patient Support Centre

Wigs, headwear, and books are available free of charge to cancer patients. Location: Level 1. Monday-Friday 8:00 am-4:00 pm. A volunteer must be present to assist.

Contact Laura O'Brien at 306-766-2512.

One Breath

A five week anticipatory grief group offered to patients and/or loved ones. The group will allow participants to discuss and share their thoughts and feelings surrounding a terminal illness. We will reflect on topics such as coping strategies, legacy work, self care, forgiveness, and creating moments of connection.

A Life Worth Writing

This 4 week virtual expressive writing group provides patients with the opportunity to reflect, process and express their individual and/or collective experiences, which may or may not be directly impacted by their cancer experience.

For more information on all groups, please call 306-766-2973

STAFF REFERRALS TO ABCC GROUPS

Most group referrals can be completed through a reminder on ARIA:

ABCC, ADT Group

ABCC, Anticipatory Group

ABCC, Body Image

ABCC, Dignity Group

ABCC, Transitions Group

ABCC, Virtual Writing Group

ABCC, Writing Group



**Support Services and Programs are made possible
thanks to our generous donors**

Saskatoon Groups and Services

Cancer Transitions Program

A 6 week program for patients who have completed cancer treatment. Issues of survivorship, emotional wellness, nutrition, exercise and moving forward after treatment are addressed.

Call 306-655-2777 to register.

Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT)

Class

For prostate cancer patients starting on ADT and their support persons.

To register call Rachelle at (306) 655-7484.

Dignity Therapy Service

A brief intervention designed to help conserve the dying patient's sense of dignity by addressing sources of psychosocial and existential distress. It gives patients a chance to record the meaningful aspects of their lives and leave something behind that can benefit their loved ones in the future. Referrals accepted anytime. Ask to speak with a social worker for more information.

Music Therapy

This class is facilitated by a certified music therapist, who will guide participants as they explore, create and connect with music to improve their quality of life. Classes held in the spring and fall on Wednesday afternoons. To register, call 306-655-6811.

Volunteer Room/Wig Boutique

Wigs, headwear, and books are available free of charge to cancer patients. Location: CG202. Monday-Friday 9:00 am-3:00 pm. A volunteer must be present to assist you. Contact Cindy Beaulé at 306-655-2688.

Stepping Stones - a walking group

Join us for a walk at any pace. Group is held during the spring, summer and fall (no winter group)

location: Queen's House of Retreat, 601 Taylor St. W.

Contact Dana @ 306-655-2777.

Restorative Yoga

A class for patients/support people. Restoration to body, mind, and spirit. Virtual classes run every Saturday from 10:30-11:30am throughout September to June. Call 306-655-2672 to inquire or register

iRest® Yoga Nidra

Yoga Nidra is a research-based, guided meditation based on the ancient practice of Yoga Nidra (yoga sleep). This meditation uses a clinically proven 10 step protocol effective in reducing stress and anxiety while improving sleep and overall resilience.

Each session will begin with Marie helping you find a restful position for relaxation followed by a guided meditation that will be approximately 45 minutes long. Call 306-655-2672

Saskatoon Cancer Centre Physiotherapy Group

The SCC and Mackie Physiotherapy have joined together to provide a 6 week physio group for our cancer patients. The group is facilitated by physio therapist Melissa Doerksen. This group is for any individual in cancer remission or undergoing cancer treatment. The group will help provide you with strategies and education that can help improve function and quality of life. The group is held on Wednesday afternoons at Mackie Physiotherapy in Saskatoon. The next group starts in May. For more information, call 306-655-6811.

STAFF REFERRALS TO SCC GROUPS

Most group referrals can be completed through a reminder on ARIA:
SCC, ADT Group
SCC, Dignity Therapy
SCC, Transitions Group
SCC, Virtual Writing Group



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Community Spotlight



Bladder Cancer Canada Prairies Virtual Support Group

For participants in Saskatchewan and Manitoba

Meets virtually the 3rd Monday of each month

To register, email info@bladdercancerCanada.org

For further information regarding national bladder cancer support groups, visit <https://bladdercancerCanada.org/en/get-support/> or call 1-866-674-8889

If you want to learn about other support groups within Saskatchewan, go to www.saskcancer.ca or use the QR code here.

