



Just the tip of the iceberg...

Evaluating the impact of a nurse-led survivorship service on the health literacy of cancer survivors



### The Challenge

How can survivorship services provide for the evolving physical, psychological & social needs of an individual across their life span?



### Health literacy & policy

Current Victorian policy advocates for

- Empowerment
- Improved levels of **health literacy**
- Improved ability to **self manage**

Ref "Victoria's Metropolitan Health plan - 2012-22"

To improve health literacy to focus on

- **Health status** & outcomes
- **Utilisation** of health services
- **Disparities** between socio-economic groups

Ref "Victoria's Rural and Regional Health Plan - 2012 - 22"



### Impact of health literacy

60% of Australians have low levels of health literacy

Ref- Australian Bureau of statistics, 2008. Health Literacy Australia.

- Limited health literacy results in
  - **overuse** emergency services and
  - experience high rates of **disease recurrence** resulting in higher **hospitalization rates** and extended hospital stays

- Complexity of cancer treatment exacerbates cancer distress

Ref - Dumenci, et al 2015. Measurement of Cancer Health Literacy and Identification of Patients with Limited Cancer Health Literacy. Journal of Health Communication International Perspectives



Socio-economic factors & health

- “Australia’s Health 2012” acknowledges a link between factors
- education, place of residence, health behaviors & income
- AND
- socio-economic disadvantage and health

Ref AIHW, 2013. Australia’s Health 2012



No 1 Disadvantaged Victorian suburb

Below state averages of

**Socio-economic**

- ✓ School retention rates
- ✓ Naplan scores
- ✓ Literacy rates
- ✓ Average household income

**Health compliance**

- ✓ Pap screening rates



No 1 Disadvantage Victorian Suburb

**Above state average**

**Chronic diseases**

- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Obesity

**Socio-economic**

- Unemployment
- Youth Unemployment
- Newly arrived people settlement



3 levels of health literacy

1. Functional literacy
2. Communications/interaction literacy
3. Critical literacy

REF: Nutbeam: 1998 & 2000. Health Promotion International: 13(4)



1. Functional literacy



2. Communications/interaction literacy





### 3. Critical literacy



### Barwon Nurse-led Survivorship Service

#### Project Eligibility

- less than 2 years post treatment
- curative chemotherapy &/or radiotherapy and surgery
- treatment groups- non Hodgkin lymphoma, head and neck, Hodgkin, stem cell transplant, colorectal, breast, bladder, medullablastoma, ovarian & continues to grow



### Intervention - 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting

#### Focus on "life after cancer"

#### Assessment

- Physical, psychosocial, financial, vocational concerns
- Lifestyle behaviours
- Co-morbidities, preventative health, genetic predisposition

#### Goal setting

- Motivational interviewing techniques
- Using the "teachable moment"



### The "Teachable Moment"

Goals – relevant & person-centred

*"I want to give up smoking because I want to be a role model for my son"*

*"I want to be around to hug for my grandchildren"*

*"I want to travel around Australia in my bus"*

Motivational interviewing techniques:

engage, focus, evoke and plan actions

Ref: Satia, et al 2004. Longitudinal changes in lifestyle behaviours and health status in colon cancer survivors  
Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev 13:1022-1031



### Intervention -2nd Meeting

#### Focus on

#### Health education/health literacy

- Individualised survivorship care plan – user friendly language
- Timely provision of information

#### Alignment with chronic disease

- Referral to community &/or rehabilitation - 50%
- Phone call & sharing of documents with GP & primary care team



Ref: [www.ophelia.net.au](http://www.ophelia.net.au)



## Results

### Significant improvement – 4 of 9 domains

- **Feeling understood and supported** by health care providers  $p = 0.025$
- Having **sufficient information**  $p = 0.002$
- Being able to **identify** good and **reliable information**  $p = 0.001$
- **Navigate** the Healthcare System  $p = 0.041$

### Approached significance - 1 of 9 domains

- **Actively engaging** with healthcare providers  $p = 0.09$



## Where to from here?

### S-Well Survivorship Wellness

- Partnership Cancer Council Victoria
- Victorian Department of Health funded
- Small group program
- Stronger focus on motivational interviewing
- Sustainability
- Regional and rural aspect

*Treatment is just the tip of the iceberg,  
survivorship is what lies beneath the surface"*



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