Upskilling community-based psychologists to deliver cancer-specific anxiety and depression treatment

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Background

- Untreated, anxiety and depression among cancer patients can lead to poor health outcomes and high health resource utilisation.
- Community-based psychologists have the skills to provide therapy to patients with anxiety and depression.
- Community-based psychologists require only focused education in cancer specific presentations to broaden their role to cancer patients.

Ramsay Health Care

- Private hospital cancer services
- Psychology service
  - Qualified and experienced psychologists
  - Primarily deliver cognitive behavioural therapy
- Challenges
  - Cancer service and psychology service not integrated
  - Lack of oncology specific expertise in psychology service

Aim

To determine the effectiveness of training community-based psychologists to deliver psychological treatment for cancer patients; and to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of this model of care.

Training

Objective:

To upskill community-based psychologists in unique aspects of oncology.

Training package:

1. Psycho-oncology basics document
2. Psycho-oncology workshop
3. Psycho-oncology resources/ worksheet document

Data collection:

Pre-training questionnaire – demographics, clinical experience, confidence

Post-training questionnaire – confidence, satisfaction

Attendees (n=3):

Female, born in Australia, English speaking, postgraduate qualified.

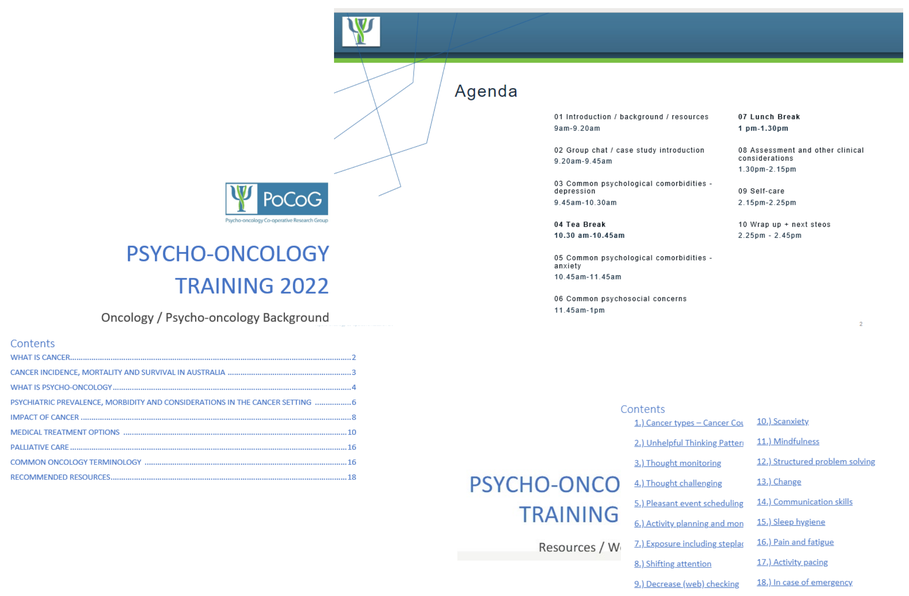
An average of 21.5 years' experience as a therapist, and an average of 1.25 years employment at Ramsay Psychology.

Outcomes:

Confidence in addressing cancer-specific anxiety and depression increased after attending the workshop

Knowledge regarding cancer specific anxiety and depression increased as a result of participating in the workshop

Feedback on the workshop:



Maybe less around CBT

[would like more of] the most common types of cancers that would be referred through the Ramsay pathway

Really liked the info specifically about oncology/ types of cancers/ medications, etc

The cancer specific examples of therapeutic intervention and phrases [were most beneficial]

Next Steps: Implementing community-based psychologists delivery of psychological treatment for cancer patients

Distress screening
- New patients within Lake Macquarie Private Hospital Day Oncology and Inpatient cancer service
- Distress thermometer (DT): ≥ 4
- Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS): ≥ 8

→ **Patient recruitment**
- Patient information sheet and consent form
- Referral to Ramsay Psychology, Charlestown

→ **Patient pre-intervention data collection**
- Demographic
- Cancer characteristics
- Credibility/Expectancy Questionnaire (CEQ)

→ **Cancer specific therapy intervention**
- Up to 6 x 45 min therapy session with trained psychologist
- Psychologist peer supervision

Psychologist session data collection
- Session checklists
- Revised Cognitive Therapy Scale
- 20% of session audio recorded

→ **Patient post-therapy data collection**
- CEQ
- HADS
- The Working Alliance Inventory
- Treatment satisfaction
- Interview

Psychologist post-therapy data collection
- Acceptability of Intervention Measure
- Intervention Appropriateness Measure
- Feasibility of Intervention Measure
- Interview

→ **Data analysis**
- Patient pre-and-post therapy quantitative
- Patient post therapy qualitative
- Psychologist post-session quantitative
- Psychologist post-therapy quantitative and qualitative

Conclusion

The training will be adapted to respond to the feedback and ensure relevance to the needs of psychologists upskilling.

The results of the implementation project will inform the utility of focused training of community-based psychologists in treatment of cancer-specific anxiety/depression.

This research will develop an integrated clinical pathway between community-based psychology services and hospital-based cancer specialists which improves access to psycho-oncology care for patients and will inform implementation of a national shared care model across Ramsay Health Care in Australia.

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