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CANCER SUPPORT

Cancer: A long term health condition - A Practice Nurse development course run by Macmillan and the University of Surrey

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Practice nurses have been identified by Macmillan as key professionals in primary care who are well positioned to support cancer patients within the community, given that they are already managing the follow up of many other long term conditions within the community. This would suggest that they have transferable skills that could be utilised.

The key aim was to enhance their existing knowledge, skills and attitudes and confidence in support of patients living with and beyond cancer - in order to try and provide better links between primary and secondary care in the area. We wanted to raise awareness amongst practice nurses that they can provide key care for their patients with cancer and we wanted to give them confidence and encouragement to allow them to expand on this.

What did we do?

- > 12 Practice Nurses
- > 2 band 3 leads on secondary care projects
- > Guest speakers - CNS, service users
- > 6 whole days over 4 months
- > Facilitated by Jackie McBride (Cancer Tutor at University of Surrey) and Julie Smallwood (Macmillan GP)

What's our USP?

Spend the day with a CNS - an opportunity to see how the patient pathway works in secondary care, and also provide a key link for them for the future.

A case study with a cancer patient - during the course we encouraged each nurse to find a cancer patient they already know and who they could spend time with.

Discuss their experience and explore how they could develop their role in future with other patients - perhaps a phone call or simple question during dressing change or suture removal.

Review if they could now provide useful resources/ signposting/information to them. When we reviewed the HNA and CCR the nurse then completed these with their patient.

What did we cover?

- > Cancer policies, epidemiology and pathology
- > Patient pathway
- > Screening and staging
- > Treatment modalities, side effects (early & late)
- > Oncological emergencies
- > Service user experiences
- > Holistic Needs Assessments (HNA) and Cancer Care Reviews (CCR)
- > Information/resources on diet and physical activity

What's next?

- Complete the course - nurses will give a presentation on their case study to explore how they may develop their role in future from their experience.
- Meet in 6 months to review influence on practice and see if further support is needed.
- Exploration with individual CCGs with the possibility of identifying this as a need for their Practice Nurses.
- Consider in future organising the nurses to also spend half a day with the hospice to provide experience of other community aspects.