

# Cancer as a long-term condition: A Macmillan pilot course for Practice Nurses

*The cancer story is changing – cancer for many is now a long-term condition. Practice nurses have a proven track record of success in supporting people with other long-term conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and COPD. Why not cancer?*

## Our questions...

What additional knowledge and skills will practice nurses need to take on an enhanced role supporting people with cancer?

What is the best way for practice nurses to receive this learning?

Will this learning change their practice?

Will there be a benefit for patients?



## What did we do?

We took 10 experienced practice nurses, one patient representative and a Macmillan GP group facilitator and met for two whole day and seven half day sessions over the course of eight months.

We fostered a collaborative learn and share environment by encouraging the practice nurses to try new ways of working within their practice and share experiences with the group.

We developed an initial framework for the course but ensured there was space for the course to be modified by the group as further learning needs emerged.

We covered topics such as:

- Pathology of cancer and modes of treatment
- Motivational interviewing
- Co-creating health and encouraging self management
- Challenging conversations
- Sharing stories
- Late adverse effects
- Warning signs of recurrence
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Lifestyle, exercise and activity

## How did we do?

There was great commitment to the course and we achieved a 96+% attendance rate.

All reported improved confidence and felt better prepared to talk to patients about their cancer.

An increase in signposting to further information and support, including giving advice about exercise and activity.

Course members have spoken at regional and national meetings about the course, and one will be acting as a co-facilitator in a future pilot of the course.

The formal evaluation will be completed through a series of one-to-one interviews and will be available December 2012.

## What's next?

Further pilot courses throughout the UK – including a consistent evaluation.

Recognition that, with appropriate training and support, practice nurses can carry out good cancer care reviews.

*“I’ve developed a heightened awareness and willingness to listen; to be involved; to be alongside. I’ve gained confidence that, as a practice nurse, I do have a role and that I can contribute to the care of our patients who live with cancer.”*

*-- Practice Nurse Course Participant*