



**Supportive
Cancer Care
Victoria**

**Supportive care competencies for health
professionals providing care for a person
affected by cancer**

July 2011

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Background

This document is to be used in conjunction with the *Framework for professional competency in the provision of supportive care* (the Framework), produced as an outcome of the Supportive Cancer Care Victoria (SCCV) project 2011. The Framework is available from the Department of Health, Victoria, Cancer and Palliative Care.

The purpose of the Framework was to guide scope-of-practice decisions and define competency expectations for clinicians when providing supportive care in the context of cancer control. This document lists the supportive care competencies as identified in the Framework and alongside each competency includes suggested resources, including on-line resources, that would assist with the achievement of the competencies. Workforce training at a local level would need to be adapted to local service needs and would be focused on the health professional's requirements to achieve the supportive care competencies.

Introduction

The details of the expected outcomes of the four strategic directions outlined in the Victorian Government's supportive care policy, *Providing optimal cancer care: supportive care policy for Victoria*, provide a basis for outlining the expectations of health professionals in providing cancer care. Consistent with the model outlined in the Framework, health professionals will require access to ongoing professional development opportunities that enable them to develop a level of supportive care competence required to meet the changing needs of the populations they serve.

The tables below describe the level of competence in supportive care for health professionals working at the 'All' and 'Many' levels of practice. The 'Some' and 'Few' health professional levels are not included as discipline-specific competencies apply to these levels.

There are two key competencies described in the next section of this framework:

1. Identifying supportive care needs
2. Addressing supportive care needs

The competencies are divided into three areas to describe what is expected of the health professional:

1. when identifying and addressing the needs of the individual
2. when engaging with the health service/organisation in the process of identifying and addressing supportive care needs
3. when taking a local community approach to identifying and addressing supportive care needs.

Clarifying what is required of the health professional at these levels focuses the education and training required and supports identifying possible gaps in professional development activities.



Competencies



Competency Standards for ALL Health Professionals

1. Identifying supportive care needs

Identifying supportive care needs - Working with INDIVIDUALS

Competency 1.1

Demonstrates understanding of the impact of a cancer diagnosis and its treatment on the interrelated physical, social, information, spiritual and psychological aspects of the person affected by cancer and understands the value of early identification of these needs

Support and resources available / needed

Updates using online education resources focused on the impact of cancer are readily available on the following links:

- EdCaN case studies — follows a person's journey with cancer utilising video clips to facilitate learning, freely available at: www.cancerlearning.gov.au/edcan_resources/#/xml/module_3/casestudies
- Cancer Learning — lists a number of resources available and provides a brief description of the content, costs and accessibility: www.cancerlearning.gov.au/find/oncfund_lrn.php
- Education Program in Cancer Care (EPICC) — aimed at primary practice; has eight online modules. Requires registration but no costs: www.canceraustralia.gov.au/health-professionals/general-practice-and-cancer-care/education-program-cancer-care
- American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS) — Cancer 101 for Mental Health Professionals, US-based lectures with four modules freely available: www.apos-society.org/professionals/meetings-ed/webcasts/webcasts-ican3.aspx#

Guidelines and policies such as the Victorian Government's Supportive Care Policy are also useful references (PDF): www.health.vic.gov.au/cancer/docs/suppacare/supportive_care_policy.pdf

Competency 1.2

Can state risk factors and protective factors that may impact on supportive care outcomes related to a cancer diagnosis including:

- *the National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre's psychosocial risk factors*
- *presence or lack of social support*
- *persistent physical symptoms*
- *difficulty in obtaining and/or understanding information*
- *expressions of hopelessness or spiritual concerns*

Support and resources available / needed

The following links include guidelines and referral checklists:

- The National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre (NBOCC) provides a summary of clinical practice guidelines for the psychosocial care of adults with cancer: www.nbocc.org.au/health-professionals/clinical-best-practice/psychosocial-care
- NBOCC provides a one-page psychosocial care referral checklist — sometimes useful with a screening tool if these factors are not already included: www.nbocc.org.au/view-document-details/pcrg-2-psychosocial-care-referral-checklist
- NBOCC provides information as to how the listed risk factors can impact on outcomes. Psychosocial care referral explanatory notes are located at: www.nbocc.org.au/view-document-details/pcrg-psychosocial-care-referral-explanatory-notes
- A list of risk factors and protective factors are available in the SCCV state-wide resource kit





Competency Standards for ALL Health Professionals

1. Identifying supportive care needs

Identifying supportive care needs - Working with INDIVIDUALS

Competency 1.3

Able to demonstrate a structured approach to supportive care screening:

- Routinely screens for supportive care needs using an evidence-based tool to identify risk factors and identify current needs
- Documents and shares results with the treating cancer team
- Aware of the environment and undertakes initial supportive care screening discussion in an area that promotes privacy with minimal interruption

Support and resources available / needed

Organisational agreement regarding the evidence-based, reliable and valid supportive care screening tool to be used.

A process for documentation of supportive care needs and referrals available in a system that enables auditing of records and method of documentation

Organisational support to enable availability of room/area and time for supportive care screening

Training regarding use of the tool selected

Online training available:

- Information regarding implementation of supportive care screening is available from: Psycho-oncology (UK) information and help website: topics include "How To: Implement a screening programme for distress in cancer settings" by Alex J Mitchell (PDF): www.psycho-oncology.info/PG_implement_ajmitchell.pdf

Other resources for use face-to-face training in use of the Distress Thermometer include:

- Gippsland Regional Integrated Cancer Services Manual — copyright exists; contact Gippsland Regional Integrated Cancer Service for copies at www.gha.net.au/grics/index.asp
- Information regarding use of the tool selected-templates for training are available in the SCCV state-wide resource kit

Competency 1.4

Understands the referral criteria, costs and waiting time for access to supportive care services and can prioritise needs so that the person is not affected by any delays

Support and resources available / needed

A list of relevant resources and information about access available both within and external to the local health service

Competency 1.5

Identifies and reinforces the person and their family's central role in managing their health

Support and resources available / needed

The following resources are available in the state-wide resource kit:

- A list of follow-up questions that assists with identifying existing supports
- An education resource to assist with training health professionals to improve skills in identifying existing supportive care resources available to individuals





Competency Standards for ALL Health Professionals

1. Identifying supportive care needs

Identifying supportive care needs - Working with ORGANISATIONS

Competency 1.6

Complies with health service reporting requirements related to supportive care screening and referrals

Support and resources available / needed

An organisational process for sharing information regarding supportive care screening results

Identifying supportive care needs - Working with COMMUNITY

Competency 1.7

Champions the use of supportive care resources available in the local community

Support and resources available / needed

Opportunities to discuss the value of supportive care service provision within the local community

A standard presentation suitable for local communities is available in the SCCV state-wide resource kit





Competency Standards for ALL Health Professionals

2. Addressing supportive care needs



Addressing supportive care needs - Working with INDIVIDUALS

Competency 2.1

Has the capacity to provide 'first line' support by demonstrating therapeutic communication skills

Structured discussions with people generally include:

- rapport building
- agenda setting
- information management
- active listening
- responding to emotions
- closure and reaching common ground

Support and resources available / needed

Face-to-face communication skills training courses are available from:

- the Cancer Council Victoria's Cancer Clinician Communication Program:
 - communication skills courses — including responding to emotional cues
 - Cancer Council Victoria Living With Cancer Education Program facilitator training offers oncology health professionals an opportunity to provide education and support for people affected by cancer
 - courses descriptions can be found at: www.cancervic.org.au/for-health-professionals/training_courses_and_education/vcccp
- St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and the University of Melbourne run short courses in essential counselling skills in cancer care. An introduction to the course can be found at: www.mccp.unimelb.edu.au/courses/professional-development/essential_counselling_skills_in_cancer_care/nocache

Free online suggestions include:

- Cancer Australia Frontline Psychosocial Support Tutorial — free of charge, registration required, video tutorial that focuses on anger, distress and depression management: www.cancerlearning.gov.au/frontline/
- University of Newcastle Research Centres, Centre for Health Research and Psycho-oncology video resource, useful for dealing with advanced cancer patients: Can Meet Needs — Skills Training to Support Needs Based Cancer Care (Progressive Disease): www.newcastle.edu.au/research-centre/cherp/can-meet-needs-resource/activity-2/
- SCCV project video resources and facilitator's guide have eight videos that focus on discussing the completed supportive care screening tool with the patient, to be made available on www.cancerlearning.gov.au website in 2011





Competency Standards for ALL Health Professionals

2. Addressing supportive care needs



Addressing supportive care needs - Working with INDIVIDUALS

Competency 2.2

Demonstrates communication skills to encourage the acceptance of a referral by:

- *introducing the concept of the multidisciplinary approach to care as an accepted standard*
- *normalising need for referral to other disciplines*
- *providing individually tailored information about the benefits of referral*
- *coordinating appointment if able*

Support and resources available / needed

Online video resource demonstrating strategies to use when introducing referrals are available as part of the SCCV state-wide resource kit

Competency 2.3

Aware of the availability of general cancer information resources suitable for people affected by cancer including telephone-based support such as the Cancer Information and Support Society

Support and resources available / needed

List of available supportive care resources for the area

A common referral form that lists all referral resources for the area

To assist in developing the content of a referral form a project toolkit has been made available free at:

- www.cancerlearning.gov.au/find/referral_toolkit.php

An example of a summary list of referral pathways is available in the SCCV state-wide resource kit

Competency 2.4

Provides a coordinating role and acts as a key contact

Support and resources available / needed

A process for communication between and within services

An example of an evaluation tool for use with the multidisciplinary team is available in the SCCV state-wide resource kit

Competency 2.5

Promotes self-management by recommending activities tailored to the individual's needs

Identifies carer burden and separates out carer need and availability of carer support

Support and resources available / needed

Training/education in promoting self-management such as those used for chronic disease management

Online education specifically focused on chronic disease planning and the Medicare benefit associated with this planning: www.3lp.rcna.org.au/10997/





Competency Standards for ALL Health Professionals

2. Addressing supportive care needs

Addressing supportive care needs - Working with INDIVIDUALS

Competency 2.6

Fosters engagement with the local community, support networks and effectively supports self-management strategies including assessment, goal setting, problem solving and follow-up

Support and resources available / needed

An explanation of chronic disease self-management care plans, templates and a process for introducing self-management care plans is freely available from this website:

- <http://chroniccondition.ranzcp.org/module-3/self-management-care-plans>

A freely available Australian fact sheet defining self-management and self-management support is available at the following website (PDF):

- www.health.vic.gov.au/pch/downloads/factsheet07.pdf





Competency Standards for ALL Health Professionals

2. Addressing supportive care needs

Addressing supportive care needs - Working with ORGANISATIONS

Competency 2.7

Champions the value of addressing supportive care needs in the organisation

Support and resources available / needed

Summary of literature/evidence to support the need to address supportive care needs

Fact sheets such as *Frequently Asked Questions* are available in the SCCV state-wide resource kit

Addressing supportive care needs - Working with COMMUNITY

Competency 2.8

Able to define gaps and consider options relating to supportive care service provision within own practice area

Support and resources available / needed

List of supportive care resources available in the area

Competency 2.9

Aware of cultural needs and the needs of special groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culturally and linguistically diverse groups

Support and resources available / needed

Cultural awareness training

Some guidelines and fact sheets relating to culturally specific issues to consider when undertaking an assessment are available from the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health. Examples of the fact sheets are:

- *How To: Culturally inclusive health assessment* (PDF): www.ceh.org.au/downloads/cult_inc_health_assess.pdf
- *Where do I find information on: Cultural Competence in Health* (Word doc): www.ceh.org.au/downloads/Cultural_Compentence_Tipsheet_2.doc

Short face-to-face courses are available from various institutions including:

- Royal District Nursing Service — for further information go to: www.rdns.com.au/education_and_research/rdns_helen_macpherson_smith_institute_of_community_health/Courses/Pages/default.aspx
- Patient information available in other languages is accessible from Cancer Council Victoria at: www.cancervic.org.au/other_languages
- Multilingual Cancer Information Line: call 13 11 20 to locate number for language
- Victorian Department of Human Services Language Services Policy: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/multicultural





Competency Standards for **MANY Health Professionals**

3. Identifying supportive care needs

Identifying supportive care needs - Working with **INDIVIDUALS**

Competency 3.1

Demonstrates an understanding and ability to apply knowledge of likely treatment pathway in order to anticipate and provide information regarding potential supportive care issues on an individual basis

Support and resources available / needed

Knowledge of supportive care issues specific to disease and treatment being provided

The Victorian Government has 15 patient management frameworks that were developed to provide a consistent statewide approach to care management in each tumour stream and are intended to improve patient outcomes located at: www.health.vic.gov.au/cancer/framework/pmfsnew.htm

There are also national clinical guidelines available for many cancer tumour streams available as reference papers on the following Cancer Learning page: www.cancerlearning.gov.au/find/evidtreat_rsrc.php

Competency 3.2

Able to undertake routine discipline-specific assessment (as a follow-up to screening) using a systematic, evidence-based approach and includes supportive care domains in the assessment

Support and resources available / needed

Discipline-specific skills in assessment





Competency Standards for **MANY Health Professionals**

3. Identifying supportive care needs

Identifying supportive care needs - Working with **ORGANISATIONS**

Competency 3.3

Engages change in their clinical setting to ensure supportive care needs of people affected by cancer are identified and documented

Support and resources available / needed

Executive-level organisational agreement on routine provision of supportive care as essential to quality care

Engaging executives can be enhanced by referring to the Victorian Government document detailing the targets for supportive care located at (PDF): www.health.vic.gov.au/cancer/docs/vcap/vcactionplan.pdf

As supportive care needs screening also fits within the following Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) EQuIP accreditation, this may be another incentive for executives to engage in the change related to improving supportive care (see www.achs.org.au/EQUIP4/):

- Standard 1.1 — consumers/patients are provided with high-quality care throughout the care delivery process
- Criterion 1.1.1 — the assessment system ensures current and ongoing needs of the consumer/patient are identified

Identifying supportive care needs - Working with **COMMUNITY**

Competency 3.4

Demonstrates an awareness of the profile of the community being served and is able to report most frequently used supportive care resources to supportive care networks

Support and resources available / needed

Regional statistics for the incidence of cancer are available from the Cancer Council Victoria website located at: <http://vcrdata.cancervic.org.au:8082/ccv/#regional>

Other information available regarding disease status, particularly for chronic disease, is listed on the Victorian Government's Fact Sheet for Primary Care Partnerships (PDF): www.health.vic.gov.au/pch/downloads/factsheet03.pdf

There is little current data available regarding the use of supportive care resources, but it is hoped that supportive care screening and referral data will assist in identifying these needs





Competency Standards for **MANY Health Professionals**



4. Addressing supportive care needs

Addressing supportive care needs - Working with **INDIVIDUALS**

Competency 4.1

Demonstrates advanced communication skills by targeting support according to discipline-specific assessment and is able to elicit and respond to emotional cues with confidence

Support and resources available / needed

Advanced communication skills training is available from:

- The Cancer Council Victoria's Cancer Clinician Communication Program. Information on available courses can be found at: www.cancervic.org.au/for-health-professionals/training_courses_and_education/vcccp
- St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and the University of Melbourne run short courses in essential counselling skills in cancer care. An introduction to the course can be found at: www.mccp.unimelb.edu.au/courses/professional-development/essential_counselling_skills_in_cancer_care/ nocache
- Deakin University provides a professional development module focused on psychosocial perspectives. For details see (PDF): www.deakin.edu.au/hmnbs/pdu/modules/brochures/cancer-care-for-health-professionals.pdf
- A Palliative Care Victoria podcast by Dr Peter Martin providing reminders or useful tips for communication is available free at: www.pallcarevic.asn.au/general/communication/
- Palliative Care Australia provides a free resource, with registration requirements, to support development of spiritual care in palliative care including perspectives from a general practitioner, nurse educator and patient: www.palliativecare.org.au/Default.aspx?tabid=1743
- The George Washington University provides a freely available short web-based resource that considers how to discuss spiritual aspects and attend a spiritual assessment in clinical practice, available at: www.gwish.org/

Competency 4.2

Communicates effectively with other members of the healthcare team and refers appropriately to facilitate efficient cancer-specific intervention for current and potential needs of the person affected by cancer

Support and resources available / needed

Communication skills training that provides a focus on team communication and communication during meetings may be achieved through some communication skills training programs

Suggestions are also included in the multidisciplinary meeting toolkit provided by the Victorian Government: (PDF): www.health.vic.gov.au/cancer/docs/ics/meet_toolkit.pdf





Competency Standards for **MANY Health Professionals**

4. Addressing supportive care needs

Addressing supportive care needs - Working with **INDIVIDUALS**

Competency 4.3

Plans and implements cancer care as part of a multidisciplinary team to meet the physical, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual aspects and information needs of the person affected by cancer

Support and resources available / needed

A process and capacity for regular multidisciplinary team meetings which requires organisational support and engagement

The Cancer Learning website provides information regarding multidisciplinary teams, including principles, setting up a team, using multimedia communication for team meetings and team meeting templates. Registration is required but is free of charge at: www.cancerlearning.gov.au/mdc.php

The Victorian Government provides a multidisciplinary meeting toolkit which includes a checklist for videoconferencing team meetings (PDF): www.health.vic.gov.au/cancer/docs/ics/meet_toolkit.pdf

Competency 4.4

Networks with the other services and multidisciplinary team members involved in the care of the person to ensure the care provided is part of a continuum of care

Support and resources available / needed

Process for communication between and within organisations such as use of a referral form, multidisciplinary team meetings that include discussion of supportive care issues and documentation of these processes

The Victorian Government has developed the policy Achieving best practice cancer care: a guide for implementing multidisciplinary care available from (PDF): www.health.vic.gov.au/cancer/docs/mdcare/multidisciplinarypolicy0702.pdf

Information about claiming the Medicare Benefits Schedule item for multidisciplinary care can be found at (PDF): www.nbooc.org.au/download-document/mdcc-information-about-the-new-mbs-items-for-multidisciplinary-cancer-care

Template examples of referral forms are included in the SCCV state-wide resource kit

Competency 4.5

*Provides information regarding specific cancer treatment, treatment effects and multidisciplinary team contacts
Provides tailored multimedia information and utilises current resources*

Support and resources available / needed

Ability to access current evidence-based resources (i.e. resources that provide the latest and most current standard of information/care)

Many resources are available from the Cancer Council Victoria website: www.cancervic.org.au/how-we-can-help

A list of reliable websites regarding cancer is available from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre website: www.petermac.org/ReliableGeneralCancerWebsiteInformation





Competency Standards for **MANY Health Professionals**

4. Addressing supportive care needs



Addressing supportive care needs - Working with INDIVIDUALS

Competency 4.6

Based on the Chronic Disease Framework, utilises techniques that promote self-management

Support and resources available / needed

Training/education in self-management techniques which may include the '5 A's' model for self-management, information about which can be found at (PDF): www.improvingchroniccare.org/downloads/3.5_5_as_behavior_change_model.pdf





Competency Standards for **MANY Health Professionals**

4. Addressing supportive care needs

Addressing supportive care needs - Working with ORGANISATIONS

Competency 4.7

Promotes networking between available resources and considers all options available to provide supportive care

Support and resources available / needed

Process for enhanced networking either via regular meetings or other contact

Consider continuing professional development evenings and inviting relevant supportive care services

Competency 4.8

Recognises and promotes the value of addressing supportive care needs and has an awareness of related targets in Victoria's Cancer Action Plan

Support and resources available / needed

The organisation has an approach to supportive care provision that is linked with the ICS strategic plan and reflects government policy

Competency 4.9

Provides input into the development of the strategic plan for supportive care services in the area

Support and resources available / needed

The organisation supports clinicians attending ICS meetings and time needed to review documents

Addressing supportive care needs - Working with COMMUNITY

Competency 4.10

Promotes effective use of resources such as Aboriginal Health Workers, interpreters and visual aids to facilitate communication and promote continuum of care

Support and resources available / needed

A process to refer people to these services

A resource kit was developed to help health services improve services offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (PDF): www.health.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/423647/icap_resource_kit2.pdf

The Cancer Council Victoria also has:

- a series of brochures and posters targeted to Koori men and women: www.cancervic.org.au/preventing-cancer/aboriginal-health/useful_links_aboriginal_resources
- Multilingual information: www.cancervic.org.au/other_languages
- A multilingual help line: www.cancervic.org.au/other_languages/multilingual_cancer_information_line

