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The Gift of Cancer

How being an occupational therapist has taught me to embrace living with a terminal illness

Presented by Janet Wright, MSOTR/L, FAOTA
Cancer Warrior

Learning Objectives

• Identify four distinct values that the occupational therapist brings to the cancer patient.
• Develop active listening skills
• Identify six areas of preventive or management intervention options
What is Cancer

- Cancer is the global term for a group of diseases that are characterized by the growth and spread of abnormal cells.
- The cause of many Cancers is unknown however external and internal factors may play a role.
- Estimated 20% of all Cancers in the US could be prevented as they are caused by a combination of external factors (World Cancer Research Fund)


Some facts about Cancer

- 2017 will see an estimated 1,688,780 NEW cancer cases
- The 5 year relative survival rate has increased 20% percentage points among whites and 24% among blacks
- The number of people living with Cancer was nearly 14.5 million in 2014 and is expected to rise to almost 19 million by 2024.
Survival rates

March 2016, shows that from 2003 to 2012, cancer death rates decreased by:

- 1.8 percent per year among men
- 1.4 percent per year among women
- 2.0 percent per year among children ages 0-19

https://www.cancer.gov

More facts about Cancer

2017 Estimates Male
- Lung & bronchus 14%
- Colon & rectum 9%
- Urinary 7%
- Melanoma 6%

2017 Estimates Females
- Breast 30%
- Lung & bronchus 12%
- Colon & rectum 8%
- Uterine 7%
- Thyroid 5%

American Cancer Society Facts and Figures 2017
A Patient’s Journey

TIME LINE OF EVENTS

2009  2010-2013  2014-2016  2017
SIDE EFFECTS

• Scar tissue
• Leg wound
• Lymphedema
• Peripheral neuropathy
• Foot drop
• Nephrostomy tube
• Port

• Medication induced anorexia
• Nose bleeds
• Mouth sores
• Chemobrain
• Fatigue
• DVT

Emphasis on Rehab for Cancer Patients

• "Rehabilitation should be well integrated into the oncology care continuum and offered to all survivors who may benefit from this care rather than to a select few,“

Julie K. Silver, M.D., associate professor at Harvard Medical School

• 2012 American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer : Survivorship Care plans
• 2012 CARF conducted market research to bridge the gap in cancer field
• 2013 International Standards Advisory Committee (ISAC)
• 2014 CARF published Cancer Rehab standards
Categories of Cancer Rehab

- Preventive
  - Reduce risk factors
  - Wellness
  - Education
  - Collaborate with acute care
  - Preoperative education
- Supportive
  - Advocacy
  - Community outreach/support
  - Address impact on caregivers and patient
  - Accommodate for disabilities
- Restorative
  - Physical, emotional, social and vocational impact
  - Knowledgeable in EBP
  - Education and support for effects of treatment
  - Return to PLOF
- Palliative
  - Collaborate with palliative team
  - Discuss wishes
  - Honor end of life choices

2014 CARF Model for Oncology Standards

Occupational Therapy’s Distinct Value in Oncology Care

- “to facilitate and enable an individual patient to achieve maximum functional performance, both physically and psychologically, in everyday living skills regardless of his or her life expectancy”
- ADL’s
- IADL’s
- Rest and Sleep
- Leisure Participation
- Vocational
- Psychosocial/Behavioral Health

AOTA 2011 The Role of Occupational Therapy in Oncology Fact Sheet
Client issues and interventions

- **Chemotherapy induced Neuropathy (CIPN)**
  - nerve disorder that can cause weakness, numbness, tingling, and pain
  - National Cancer Institute Estimates 30-40% of patients experience CIPN

- Adaptive equipment
- Task analysis
- Energy conservation
- Exercise
- Environmental adaptations
- Pain management/relaxation
- Fall prevention
- Safety

Client issues and interventions

- **Fatigue**
  - Rest does not alleviate cancer related fatigue
  - American Cancer society Estimates 70-100% of patients experience fatigue

- Modifications
- Energy conservation
- Exercise/activities
- Lifestyle redesign
- 4 P’s
  - Planning
  - Prioritizing
  - Positioning
  - pacing
Client issues and interventions

• **Chemobrain**
  - No tests for chemobrain
  - Typically test average on cognitive tests
  - Forgetfulness, difficulty concentrating, takes longer to complete things, poor multi-tasking, word finding difficulties

• Cognitive strategies
  - Coping strategies
  - Movement
  - Nutrition
  - Attention strategies
  - Mindfulness

Other common side effects

• Lymphedema
• Pain
• Sleep problems
• Wound care
• Urinary Bladder issues
• Sexuality
The power of occupation

The Power of Occupation
QUESTIONS

REFERENCES


REFERENCES


• National Cancer Institute [http://cancer.gov]


