

GWH Cancer Buddy Service- What we've learnt along the way...

Macmillan Personalised Care Team
Voluntary Services
Cancer Clinical Psychology Team

Background

- Cancer Partnership Group and Cancer Management Team identified the need of cancer patients to have better support
- Unable to launch service due to organizational constraints, time, work commitments followed by the Covid-19 pandemic
- Macmillan PCT tasked to set up a 'cancer buddy' service after coming into post in 2022
- Joint partnership of Macmillan PCT, Voluntary Services and Chaplaincy (with additional input from psychology and Staff Health and Wellbeing)
- Initially ran a 6 month pilot last year - now becoming embedded within cancer services

Setting up of the Pilot



- Cancer Buddy Volunteer role advertised by Voluntary Services
- Recruited Buddies through interviews
- 13 were recruited took through 10
- Training provided for these Buddies on a range of topics
- Buddies encouraged to seek staff support
- Pilot to run from the hospital site only
- Telephone and face-to-face interactions offered to patients
- Buddies documented interactions



Evaluation process

- Evaluation of project to be addressed after 6 months (1st June to 30th November 2022)
- Combined methodology: Qualitative & Quantitative data collated

QUALITATIVE:

- Questionnaires for patients & Buddies
- Focus group with staff involved
- Focus group with Buddies
- Individual case studies by Macmillan:
2 x Buddies & 2 x patients

QUANTITATIVE:

- Number of patient / Buddy interactions
- Number of hours logged

Our Findings: what went well

- Teamwork
- Robust recruitment process
- Matching Buddies with patients with similar interests
- Trusting relationships between patient & Buddy
- Released pressure from the nursing staff
- Positive effect on Buddies
- Support offered to Buddies by the Team
- Buddies enjoyed a sense of belonging to a team, having purpose and motivation
- Going full circle...

“I think that because we were all so engaged we were able to get it moving... we all came together with a common goal to move it forward”

Our learnings from the Pilot

- Need for a service Co-Ordinator
- NHS email account for Buddies
- Additional training needed / amendments to training schedule
- Importance of setting boundaries and expectations- letting patients know about length of support
- Official supervision time now set up with clinical psychology team : 8 weekly, but drop in sessions with PCT in between if needed.
- Clarification on Buddy service and criteria for referrals
- We can offer Buddies as 121 for patients as well as Buddies now covering Chemotherapy Day Unit 4 days a week, hoping to go up to 5 days a week in near future
- Buddies' availability
- Information sharing(confidentiality clause at the beginning)
- Improve on the advertising of service

Recent Data

From 12th June until the end of September 2023 our cancer buddies

- **Volunteered 9,540 minutes of their time which is 159 hours and during that time they have supported 356 patients on the wards or 1:1.**
- Currently we have 14 active cancer buddies.
- We have some more volunteers who wish to become cancer buddies who are due to undertake the third cohort of training and support to increase our volunteer number to approx. 20 cancer buddies within the Trust

Quotes from Cancer Buddies

“ I found it (being a cancer buddy) quite cathartic, because I had my cancer diagnosis during lockdown & I didn't have any support & I think I would've really benefitted from something like this.”

“ The chap I had, said in his first phonecall, I can talk to you about things I can't talk to my wife and kids about”

“...it was after the second treatment and (the patient) kept saying, “I just wish you had been there the first time”.

“(Being a Cancer Buddy) has given me a sense of belonging to a team, & motivation to volunteer again at GWH after the “Covid outbreak”, being useful on a one-to-one basis.”

“For me it was a chance to give back to the NHS who did so much for me”

Quotes from Patients

“Talking to my cancer buddy was great. When I dried up, he carried on the conversation. He had the experience to talk. He was as it should be; someone with experience of cancer.”

“I don’t think it would have been any good talking to someone who had not been through it.’

“If I hadn’t of had a Buddy, I don’t know what I would have done to be quite honest.”

*“You wait and you wait and you wait and with the waiting become more and more anxious!
It is a good job my Buddy was there!”*

“(My Buddy is) just somebody there for support and that’s exactly what she gave me really.”

*“It’s nice to have somebody to talk to, who’s there and understands what’s going on...
it gives me something to look forward to once a week, because at the moment, I haven’t got a lot”*

Now over to our cancer buddies.....

Pete, Sarah, and Tracey