
Cancer wellness initiative

Initiative Type

Redesign

Status

Deliver

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12 August 2021

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<https://test.clinicalexcelsence.qld.gov.au/improvement-exchange/cancer-wellness-initiative>

Summary

Initially, the vision for the Cancer Wellness Initiative (CWI), established by Princess Alexandra Hospital's (PAH) Cancer Services, was to establish a physical centre where wellness programs and support could be delivered. However, when the sudden and unexpected wide-spread shift towards online modalities occurred in 2020, the team needed to reimagine the service delivery model to meet the wellness needs of people with cancer at the PAH without the ability to provide in-person care.

Given the over-abundance of cancer information online, conflicting advice and potential to lead people down online rabbit holes, the team wanted to create an authoritative, evidence-based, virtual home for PAH patients seeking wellness information, programs and services. Multiple workshops were run by the Cancer Wellness Initiative prior to the engagement with the Healthcare Improvement Unit and Queensland University of Technology's Healthcare Excellence AcceLerator (HEAL), which had begun to scaffold ideas for the initial service design, ensuring a truly collaborative design process throughout. The collaboration between HEAL and the CWI involved four phases: Mapping, Visualising, Co-designing and Evaluating. First, the team imagined their outcomes and mapped out the future of the service. It was immediately clear that the team needed to re-connect with end-users – people with cancer and patients at the PAH – to better understand how their current and emerging needs could be met with an online offering.

Key dates

Sep 2020

Implementation sites

Princess Alexandra Hospital

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Aim

To advocate and innovate towards the provision of integrated, streamlined wellness support to all cancer patients receiving care at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

Benefits

By engaging with cancer patients directly and clearly documenting the knowledge translation process into actionable outcomes, the HEAL team were able to support the CWI in re-imagining the future of the initiative. By creating a new brand this visual would help delineate the CWI as a unique service while celebrating its ties to the PA Research Foundation and hospital.

Background

The conversation around wellness as a crucial compliment to medical cancer treatment is ever-growing. Yet, in Queensland there is currently no public cancer centre specifically designed to holistically treat all aspects of the self – mind, body and spirit. The project was founded on the notion that patients at the PAH were craving a unified source for reliable and supportive wellness information.

Solutions Implemented

- Cancer wellness information should be digestible - "We're given so much information at once that it gets overwhelming".
- Cancer wellness information should be consistent and reliable - "I didn't know until one of the other patients told me about..."
- Cancer wellness should be presented in a way that is normalising - "I need reassurance that what I'm experiencing is normal."
- Cancer wellness should be site-specific - "I want to know what's happening at the PAH."
- The platform should support the shift in mindset, from cancer treatment to wellness - "In the beginning it was all about the cancer, then my mindset shifted."
- The platform should support supporters of people with cancer cancer - "Half of the battle was communicating all of this information to 'the committee' –my partner, family, and friends."

Evaluation and Results

The ongoing collaboration between HEAL designers and CWI had a profoundly positive impact on the direction of the project.

The overwhelming experience of many people with cancer indicated it was crucial that the nuanced delivery of information was carefully considered. By engaging with cancer patients directly and clearly documenting the knowledge translation process into actionable outcomes, the HEAL team were able to support the CWI in re-imagining the future of the initiative.

Lessons Learnt

A key lesson from this collaboration was the importance of engaging with end-users throughout the entire design process, especially when the initial goals change or new limitations are imposed throughout the life of the project.

References

- Nixon, J., Chan, R., McKinnell, E., Ward, E., Pinkham, E., Wishart, L., E., Miller & Brown, B. (2021). Rethinking the Meaning of “Wellness” for a Person with Cancer: A Qualitative Study to Explore What Elements Constitute “Wellness”. *Asia?Pacific Journal of Oncology Nursing*. DOI: 10.4103/apjon.apjon-212
- Pinkham, E. P., Teleni, L., Nixon, J. L., McKinnel, E., Brown, B., Joseph, R., ... & Chan, R. J. (2021). Conventional supportive cancer care services in Australia: A national service mapping study (The CIA study). *Asia?Pacific Journal of Clinical Oncology*. doi/10.1111/ajco.13575