

“VOCO”
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselling Pilot Program
for Adolescent and Young Adult Survivors of Childhood Cancer
BC Children’s Hospital
April 2013

Objective

To evaluate a pilot program providing vocational rehabilitation counselling for adolescent and young adult survivors of childhood cancer patients.

Design

A mixed methods questionnaire was designed to evaluate service delivery, and was completed by patients and caregivers attending the counselling sessions.

Setting

Counselling sessions took place in a private office at BC Children’s Hospital.

Participants

Patients (15-25 years) attending the Children’s Oncology Long Term Follow Up Clinic were selected and prioritized based on physical, psychological and educational disabilities.

Intervention

One-to-one counselling was provided for 85 adolescents and young adults and their caregiver(s) to establish a vocational plan. Participants met with the Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellor to review interests, abilities, challenges, psychosocial concerns, and resources in their geographic region.

Main Outcome Measure

Of the 85 patients receiving services, 49 completed mixed methods questionnaires. 40 caregivers also completed questionnaires.

Results

Most salient for the adolescents was that vocational rehabilitation counselling helped identify strengths and obtain information about future vocational possibilities. One teen commented: “I loved the part when my parents stepped out. It was much easier to say what was really on my mind”; another wrote: [it] “put me on a path to find things that play to my strengths/weaknesses.” Caregivers indicated that the service helped their child develop vocational goals. A number of caregivers expressed a desire for more sessions.

Conclusions

The high positive response rate (40+%) confirmed the need for vocational rehabilitation counselling for adolescent and young adult survivors of childhood cancer as part of long term follow up care.

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