

SPECIAL REPORT

Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Standards of Psychosocial Care

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Many disciplines contribute significantly to the emotional well being of children with cancer and their families. Individuals who provide supportive care include child life specialists; nurses; pediatric oncologists; spiritual leaders; physical and occupational therapists; nutritionists; psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists. Mutual respect for professional roles and communication to families of each profession's role and responsibilities enhances patient and family centered care. Team members collaborate to enhance communication to patients and parents, observe changes in behavior, support decision making, provide empathetic listening, maximize adherence, minimize distress for children and their caregivers related to illness and treatment, and optimize quality of life. They may need to initiate referrals to community psychosocial care providers to initiate assessment or treatment of patients and their families. They may also participate in follow-up or school re-entry activities.

In this special issue, psychosocial care providers refer to behavioral health professionals who assess children and adolescents with cancer and their family members and offer appropriate psychological and/or psychopharmacological treatment. Their responsibilities may include conducting diagnostic evaluation and assessments of children and family members; development

and implementation of treatment plans including psychotherapeutic individual and family treatment and evidence- or guideline-based interventions; administration of neuropsychological and/or psychological testing; and participation in team communication to the patient and family. Psychosocial care providers offer consultation on psychological management of patients to members of the pediatric oncology team. Psychiatrists may also evaluate patients and sometimes, parents, provide recommendations for psychopharmacological intervention and monitor effectiveness of the medication in managing pain or distress. Essential training requirements and credentialing for the psychosocial care providers are described in the following article, in this special issue, by Patenaude, Pelletier, and Bingen.[1] Although some roles overlap, respect for the essential training of all team members and the special skills and strengths of each professional group is most beneficial to children with cancer and their family members.

REFERENCE

1. Patenaude AF, Pelletier W, Bingen K. Staff training, communication and documentation standards for psycho-oncology professionals providing care to children with cancer. *Pediatr Blood Cancer* 2015;62:S755-S779.

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