

Wendy Pelletier joins the Core Implementation Team

Wendy Pelletier began her career in pediatric psychosocial oncology over 30 years ago as a member of the Psychosocial Resources Team, pediatric oncology specialty, at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre and Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary, Canada.

Over the years her clinical work and research interests have focused on many areas relevant to this changing field. Her earlier work was centered on cognitive, behavioral, and pharmaceutical interventions for coping with procedural pain in children with cancer. By the mid-1990's she became interested in the foundational work in the field of (psychosocial) pediatric hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT).

Over the past 20 years, Wendy specialized in pediatric psychosocial care for children and their families undergoing transplant; studying the ethical considerations for minor sibling HSCT donors as well as developing protocols for assessment and surveillance of these donors. Family decision-making in hematopoietic stem cell transplantation has also been a clinical and research interest.

Understanding the influence a childhood cancer diagnosis has on a parental partnership has been another focus of research and clinical work. The psychosocial issues families face across the cancer trajectory, including palliative care and bereavement care have also been an important aspect of her clinical work. As cancer treatments evolve further and become more complex, and as more genetic studies are being conducted with children and their parents, new ethical and treatment issues are coming to the forefront that necessitate further study. Wendy has had clinical experience in working with families around decisions to consent to autopsy in their children and is also studying the emerging field of tumor banking post-mortem.

Wendy holds professional affiliations with the Children's Oncology Group (Behavioral Science, Bioethics, Return of Research Results, and Diversity and Health Disparities Committees), and the Association of Pediatric Oncology Social Workers (APOSW) where she has served as a board member and frequent conference attendee and presenter.

Wendy has received awards such as Social Worker of the Year from APOSW, Life-time Contribution Award (APOSW) and Outstanding Clinical Care Award (American Psychosocial Oncology Society). So much of what Wendy has learned over the years, she feels, has come from collaboration with extraordinary colleagues and the remarkable privilege of walking alongside children with cancer and their families.

Wendy stated, "a highlight of my career has been the opportunity to participate in the development of the Standards for Psychosocial Care for Children and their Families. Being able to work alongside Vicki and Peter has been such an indescribably powerful experience; witnessing parents whose personal devastating loss and grief has led to creating this legacy work for future generations of children with cancer and their families has been humbling."