

# SUPPORTIVE CARE TEAM MEMBERS

For People Living with Cancer

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**Waterloo Wellington  
Regional Cancer Program**


Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario)

# About Supportive Care

The focus of supportive care is to help you manage your cancer experience. The Psychosocial Oncology (PSO) team is a group of healthcare professionals. **They specialize in supportive care for people living with cancer while on cancer treatment.** To see someone from the PSO team, you need a **referral** from your Oncologist (cancer doctor) or nurse. The PSO team offers appointments in-person, over the phone, or virtually (online video).

Supportive care includes many kinds of help such as:

- Caring for your mental, social, and emotional well-being
- Giving religious or spiritual support
- Helping to manage symptoms or side effects of cancer or cancer treatment
- Giving advice about food choices or what to eat and drink
- Helping you enjoy a good quality of life



## How can you see a Supportive Care team member?

If you think any of these services are right for you ask your Oncologist or Nurse about a referral.

## Supportive Care Team Members

### Music Therapists

The goal of music therapy is to improve your quality of life using music. You don't need any special training in music to benefit from a session. These sessions focus on your musical interests.

In a music therapy session, you might:

- Listen to music
- Build playlists
- Sing
- Make music
- Talk about lyrics
- Use music to relax

A Music Therapist can also help:

- Relax your mind and body
- Distract from pain and symptoms
- Reduce fear/anxiety from health care visits
- Address fears and concerns
- Guide life review through music
- Offer comfort during end of life

### Psychiatrists

A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who can diagnose, treat, and prescribe medicine for mental health.

A Psychiatrist can help you manage:

- Depression and/or anxiety
- Insomnia
- Fears that are overwhelming
- Changes in personality
- Changes in thoughts

Treatment from a Psychiatrist may include:

- A referral for counselling
- Making a plan to trial a new medicine(s)

## Registered Dietitians

Eating and drinking well will help you through cancer treatment. Good nutrition gives you energy and improves quality of life. A cancer diagnosis and treatments may make it hard to eat and drink enough to meet your body's needs. A Registered Dietitian (RD) will tailor a plan to help you get the nutrition you need during treatment.

Registered Dietitians will:

- Review how much you eat and drink
- Give you nutrition advice to help manage symptoms, side effects, and slow/stop weight loss
- Help plan ways to meet your nutrition needs
- Review nutrition support options if it becomes hard to eat or drink



### Nutrition Care Outside of the Cancer Centre

The WRHN Cancer Centre RDs focus on helping people with cancer-related nutrition issues. If you have other nutrition topics you would like help with, view RD options in the community:



Registered Dietitian with a patient during an in-person session.

## Social Workers

Coping with cancer and everything that comes with it can be hard. Social Workers at WRHN Cancer Centre offer counselling to you, your family, or care partners. You must be over the age of 18 to access these services.

A Social Worker will help you to:

- Cope with your cancer diagnosis and treatment
- Manage stress, fear, anxiety, sadness, anger, and grief/loss
- Talk about your diagnosis with others and support these relationships
- Understand and cope with the impact of cancer on sex and body image
- Have end-of-life discussions with loved ones
- Adjust to life after cancer treatment (i.e., return to work, etc.)
- Manage home life by referring you to community support
- Access financial support (e.g., applying for government programs like Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program)
- Support your loved ones with their counselling needs

**Patients can self-refer to the social work team at  
519-479-4380 ext. 6857**

## Speech Language Pathologists

A Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) will assess and treat issues with your swallowing, speech, language, and voice.

This support may include:

- Review of your swallowing or speech changes
- Help choosing safe food textures
- Extra tests (like X-Rays) to better assess swallowing
- Act as a resource for you through treatment (including end-of-life feeding)

### Coping with Trouble Swallowing

Learn more about SLPs and how they will help if you are having trouble swallowing.



## Spiritual Care Providers

Spiritual care is about connecting with you at a time of great need and going on that journey with you. Many people think that spiritual care is 'religious care', but it's much more than that. Spiritual care is still helpful for both religious and non-religious people.

Spiritual Care supports a whole-person approach to healthcare that includes:

- Supporting your sense of wellbeing in the face of change
- Embracing your emotions
- Bringing attention to the stories that shape you
- Connecting you with your body
- Engaging your mind

Our Spiritual Care providers will help through:

- Supportive listening
- Exploring hope
- Talking about what provides meaning and purpose in your life
- Connecting you with your inner strength
- Connecting you with communities that can support your spiritual well-being
- Exploring feelings around your diagnosis, treatment, or medical experience

Use this resource for your information only. It does not replace medical advice from your doctor or other health care professionals.



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