APPROACHING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION FROM A CANCER SURVIVORSHIP PLANNING PERSPECTIVE

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Approaching DEI from a Cancer Survivorship planning perspective

The Cancer Resource Center of the Desert (CRCD)

• CRCD is a small non-profit organization dedicated to providing Cancer Patient Navigation to persons diagnosed with cancer who live in Imperial County, CA since 2006
• CRCD serves men, women, and children diagnosed with cancer, anywhere on the cancer continuum: any cancer, any stage, at no cost to the patient
• Remove/mitigate barriers to cancer care
• Strategically integrated with oncologists in multidisciplinary effort to support POC
• We are a team of 7 Bilingual/Bicultural medical social workers specializing in cancer care
• Funding: Private Donations, contracts, Fundraising, Grants, Medicare/Medicaid, Research
CRCD’s Geographical Area & Population

- Location: Imperial County, California, is a rural, border community that borders Arizona, Mexico, and the regions of Palm Springs and San Diego, California.
- Population: 182,000
- Imperial County is known as an underserved region 100 miles away from the nearest tertiary care center with a predominantly 85% Latinx population
- Imperial County is a U.S. community that commonly engages in binational access to healthcare both in the U.S. and in Mexico
- Imperial County ranks last out of all counties in California for socioeconomic factors, is designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area and a Medically Underserved Area.
PATIENT NAVIGATOR (PN) APPROACH TO DEI

- Impoverished community; monolingual Spanish speakers, low literacy and even lower health literacy.
- Remove/mitigate barriers and “push the system” on patient behalf to provide fair access
- Person with cancer is in emotional distress; financial distress; uninsured or underinsured
- PNs approach the patient with cancer and their family with dignity and respect, communicating in patient’s primary language.
- Identifying what the person understands about their cancer diagnosis AND What they are wanting (their goal) as well as establish stabilizing goals for cancer POC
- While experiencing COVID-19 Pandemic
CRCD Patient Navigators approach our cancer patients right where they are in their cancer experience and partner with them and their families.

- **Initial emotional crisis upon receiving the cancer diagnosis:** CRCD provides emotional support. Increases knowledge about the specific diagnosis.

- **Fear of the implications of the cancer diagnosis:** CRCD utilizes tools from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) & other national organizations, educates the patient and family.

- **Difficulty understanding the cancer diagnosis:** CRCD uses specialized tools to review specific information about diagnostic work-ups, staging, treatment options, etc. At patient’s request, assist with information on obtaining a 2nd opinion.

- **Difficulty understanding the treatment process:** CRCD educates the patient & family about the specific treatment plan associated with their diagnosis & provides them with educational materials.

- **Difficulty communicating with physicians:** CRCD assists the patient/ families to communicate their questions, concerns, and other important information to their physicians through counseling. At patient’s request, CRCD also will speak to the physician on the patient’s behalf or communicate via memos or letters to the physician.

- **Language/Cultural differences:** CRCD staff is bilingual (English/Spanish) and bicultural. CRCD educates patients in their language, addressing cultural issues.

- **Lack of insurance or underinsured:** If uninsured, CRCD assists the patient to apply for medical coverage including specialized State programs for certain cancer types. If underinsured, CRCD determines if there are co-pay relief programs the patient is eligible for and assist in the application process.

- **Lack of adequate transportation:** CRCD determines if the patient is eligible for transportation assistance through local programs & applies on their behalf when eligible; will register & apply to national organizations that provide specific transportation assistance; augments those services with complimentary gas cards.

- **Reduced Income due to diagnosis & treatment:** Consideration of State & Federal programs the patient may be eligible for including State Disability Insurance, Social Security Disability, & Supplemental Security Income & assistance in applying for such programs when needed.
Many people survive a cancer diagnosis. A Survivorship Care Plan (SCP) is a summary of a cancer care plan and is established towards the end of cancer treatment as the patient transitions to cancer survivorship.

Currently CRCD and UCSD School of Medicine are conducting a SCP with a Reproductive Healthfocus(SCP-R) pilot study to improve oncofertility care in primarily Spanish speaking Latina Young Breast Cancer Survivors (YBCS).

This study is a clinic-based oncofertility needs screen, women’s health SCP-R, patient navigation and telehealth of reproductive counseling. This study addresses women’s reproductive health care at breast cancer diagnosis and post-treatment.

CRCD also participated in a previous SCP study for rural Latinas with Breast Cancer which created a comprehensive cultural and linguistically tailored SCP document and animated video (telenovela) as a SCP aid. This study did not address reproductive health.

The cultural tailoring of the SCP intervention for rural Latinas with Breast Cancer expands the knowledge base clinicians should consider particularly those who may receive health care from different health systems, such is the case in binational, US/Mexico border context.
Survivorship Care Plan with Reproductive Health Focus (SCP-R)
Reproductive health care after cancer treatment:
(i.e. infertility, contraception and preconception counseling and services)
Clinically mitigates and prevents adverse outcomes in YBCS

Patient Guide: Fertility Concerns Offered in English and Spanish
Survivorship Care Plan with Reproductive Health Focus (SCP-R)

Patient Guide: Contraception Offered in English and Spanish
Survivorship Care Plan with Reproductive Health Focus (SCP-R)

Patient Guide: Estrogen Deprivation Concerns
Offered in English and Spanish
Thank You!

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