

A dyadic coping and communication intervention to help younger couples experiencing sexual and reproductive health concerns after cancer

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INTRODUCTION

AYA cancer survivors and their partners lack evidence-based interventions to address their SRH needs after cancer. The objectives of this study include:

Aim 1: Systematically adapt an empirically supported couple-based skills training intervention to help young breast/gynecologic cancer survivors and their partners cope with SRH concerns after cancer.

Aim 2: Evaluate efficacy by conducting a randomized controlled trial comparing two interventions: the original intervention focused only on coping with cancer, and the adapted intervention focused on coping with cancer and SRH concerns.

METHODS

We are utilizing the **ADAPT-ITT framework** to systematically adapt the intervention:

- ① **Assessment and Decision:**
 - Assess community need and establish approach to meet need.
 - Conducted interviews with 25 couples; results revealed need for dyadic intervention that addressed SRH needs preferably in an online format.
- ② **Administration:**
 - Consult with intended audience, experts, and stakeholders to on decide and review intervention materials to be adapted.
 - Conducted interviews with 11 couples; consulting with community advisors, stakeholders, and experts in social work, clinical psychology, oncology, etc.
- ③ **Production:**
 - Adapt original program to align needs of intended audience with a focus on SRH concerns.
 - Integration of feedback from administration phase into adapted program (see results for more details).
- ④ **Topic Experts and Integration:**
 - Produce new draft of intervention based on feedback from intended audience, experts and stakeholders.
 - Integration of feedback from administration phase into adapted program (see results for more details).
- ⑤ **Training:**
 - Train the program interventionist. *In progress.*
- ⑥ **Testing:**
 - Evaluate efficacy of program.
 - Randomized control trial to begin Summer 2021.

Young adult cancer survivors and their partners often experience **sexual and reproductive (SRH) health challenges after cancer**, but there are limited resources to address these issues.

We've adapted an **intervention to help build coping and communication skills** for couples' sexual and reproductive health after cancer.

Scan below to find out **more information** on the program and if you're **eligible to participate!**



RESULTS

Results from the first round of program feedback reveal several key findings:

- **Couples want an opportunity to focus on current SRH needs.** We've integrated flexible communication prompts on SRH topics throughout the intervention as well as a brand new session to focus on couples' SRH desired topic.
- **Couples value "being on the same page" about their family planning values and goals.** We've integrated specific prompts during skill building that focus on fertility and family building, as well as a relationship and SRH goal setting activity.
- **It's important for survivors that partners understand the physical changes and consequences of cancer.** Communication exercises include prompts on physical and emotional intimacy challenges and changes as well as body image issues.
- **Couples' want digestible, reliable, and comprehensive SRH information.** We've developed brand new handouts with comprehensive, bulleted information, options for SRH care, and specific action steps couples can take.
- **Other Results:**
 - Desire for interventionist with cancer and cancer survivorship experience, non-judgemental, and have expertise in social work, counseling or related disciplines.
 - Opportunity to build rapport with the interventionist and tailor the intervention to couples' specific needs.
 - Approachable home practice.

NEXT STEPS

Next steps for this study based on the **ADAPT-ITT framework** include:

- Currently in the process of conducting follow-up interviews with 3 couples to receive feedback on SRH adaptations made to program.
- Integration of any additional feedback and confirm final materials for RCT.
- Determine interventionist and complete training.
- Summer of 2021 evaluate the efficacy of the intervention via a RCT. **We hypothesize that a SRH-focused program will reduce sexual and reproductive distress to a greater degree than the control program.**



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