



Training prostate cancer survivors and caregivers to be peer navigators: a blended online/in-person competency-based training program

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Abstract

Purpose Cancer navigation improves access to support and reduces barriers to care; however, appropriate training of navigators is essential. We developed the TrueNTH Peer Navigation Training Program (PNTTP), a competency-based, blended online/in-person course. In this study, we evaluate the feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of the PNTTP among prostate cancer (PC) survivors (patients, caregivers).

Methods We employed an explanatory mixed method study design consisting of course usage data, pre-/post-questionnaires, and focus groups informed by the Kirkpatrick framework and self-efficacy theory.

Results Three cohorts in two Canadian cities ($n = 26$) received the PNTTP. Participants were motivated to support others like themselves ($n = 20$), fill a gap ($n = 7$), pay it forward ($n = 6$), and offer expertise ($n = 4$). Recruitment, retention, and questionnaire completion were 96.7%, 89.6%, and 92%. Participants contributed a total of 426 posts to the online forums (2 to 3 posts per participant/module). Satisfaction was 9.4/10 (SD = 0.7) and usability was 84.5/100 (SD = 10.1). All learning outcomes increased: understanding of learning objectives $t(23) = -6.12, p < 0.0001$; self-efficacy to perform competencies $t(23) = -4.8, p < 0.0001$; and eHealth literacy $t(23) = -4.4, p < 0.0001$. Participants viewed the PTNP as intensive but manageable, improving knowledge and confidence and enhancing listening skills. Participants valued the flexibility of online learning, interactive online learning, in-person interactions for relationship building, and authentic role-playing for skill development.

Conclusions A facilitated online training program with in-person components is a highly acceptable and effective format to train PC survivors to become peer navigators. This competency-based peer navigator training program and delivery format may serve as a useful model for other cancer volunteer programs.

Keywords Peer navigator · Prostate cancer · Training program · Online learning · Mixed methods

Introduction

The delivery of cancer care is complex and fragmented involving a wide range of practitioners and settings resulting in delays and missed opportunities for person-centered care

[1, 2]. Cancer patients lack access to relevant information and support and report gaps in access to supportive care throughout the continuum of care [3–6]. Patient navigation has emerged as means to address gaps in access to information and support and provide person-centered care [7, 8]. Several

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