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# Development of a Two Day Wellbeing Course for Supporters of Teenagers and Young Adults (TYA) with Cancer

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## Background

Previous work undertaken by the South West TYA Service evidenced the practical and emotional impact of a diagnosis of cancer on teenagers and young adults with cancer (TYAs) and on those closest to them<sup>1</sup>. To fill this gap, an innovative two day wellbeing course is being piloted by Bristol based holistic cancer charity Penny Brohn UK. The aim of this project is to see if a Penny Brohn UK’s previously established Living Well course<sup>2</sup> to help adults with cancer could be modified to support the supporters of TYAs with cancer. Penny Brohn UK’s Living Well course adopts a person-centred holistic approach for mind, body, spirit and emotions, known as the Bristol Whole Life Approach. Five Living Well courses for TYA supporters are being trialled over an 18-month period to understand how supporting TYA supporters can improve their wellbeing and impact positively on the TYAs themselves.

***“I have experimented more with a wider range of foods. More meditation - not yet daily, but probably every other day I do some meditation. Openly talk to my daughter about how I feel when she is angry. Have said 'yes' to any invites from friends.” (Quote from TYA supporter 6 weeks after the Living Well course)***

## Conclusions

This feasibility data indicates that the innovative wellbeing course for supporters of TYA cancer patients has been well received. Furthermore, there is a secondary benefit to the TYA cancer patients themselves. Ongoing data collection across future courses will inform future service provision for TYAs with cancer and their supporters.

## Methods

Mixed methods pre-post design with data collection at beginning of course and 6 weeks later. Measures include: Measure Yourself Concerns and Wellbeing (MYCaW)<sup>3</sup>; Health & Wellbeing Wheel; participant experience questionnaire. The impact on the TYAs themselves will also be investigated.

## Results

10 supporters attended the first course. Main concerns reported were psychological and emotional, including depression, anxiety, sleep and stress. Early data shows that the courses are well received; supporters rated it as 4.3 out of 5 for meeting their needs and 4.4 out of 5 for meeting their expectations. There are also improvements in MYCaW concerns and wellbeing (main concern pre 5.3/6, post 4.3/6; wellbeing pre 3.5/6, post 3/6, with 6 being the worst). Supporters reported that the course supported them to improve their diet and use of self-help techniques. After 6 weeks, a positive impact was also reported from the TYAs themselves, and they subsequently also reported making some positive lifestyle changes, such as improved diet.

***It [Living Well course] gives them time away, not in hospital environment, from their unwell child/young adult and focus on themselves. This is one of the only events/opportunities I know about for my supporters. I think it helps them to relax and understand a bit of what I'm going through. This could help us as a family, keep us relaxed in hospital appointments etc., deal with the tough times.”***  
(Quote from a TYA patient)



## References

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan Cancer Support, University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust. On Target: Analysis Phase Consolidated Findings Report, 2013.  
<sup>2</sup> Polley M, Jolliffe R, Boxell E, Zollman C, Jackson S, Seers H. Using a whole person approach to support people with cancer: a longitudinal, mixed-methods service evaluation. Integrative Cancer Therapies, 2016: 1-11.  
<sup>3</sup> Jolliffe R, Polley M, Jackson S, Caro E, Weeks L, Seers H. The responsiveness, content and convergent validity of the Measure Yourself Concerns and Wellbeing (MYCaW) patient reported outcome measure. Integrative Cancer Therapies, 2015; 14(1):26-34.