



# **Cancer Counselling Professionals Inc**

## *Easing the emotional burden of cancer*

### **History and Overview of Cancer Counselling Professionals Inc**

Cancer Counselling Professionals Inc was formed to address the psychosocial or emotional needs of cancer patients and their families in Australia. It was incorporated on 17 November 2005 and represents professionals from the fields of psycho-oncology, psychiatry, psychology, counselling and psychotherapy.

Most members have a background in working with clients affected by cancer, either formally through working in oncology such as radiation therapy, oncology nursing, or through specialisation in counselling in this area.

All committee members have a minimum of 5 years of experience in oncology or in dealing with cancer related issues.

CCP Inc aims to provide an Australia-wide service. While it is easy to find speciality counsellors to offer face-to-face counselling in the major metropolitan areas, it is much more difficult in rural areas.

To address this need, CCP Inc also promotes a telephone counselling service for clients who are geographically isolated. Some counsellors offer home or hospital visits and have experience of providing support by Internet. Details of the services offered by individual members are available on CCP Inc's website:

[www.cancercounselling.com.au](http://www.cancercounselling.com.au)

### **Our Vision, Mission and Ethics**

#### **Our Vision : to ease the emotional burden of cancer**

While there are many ways to support people affected by cancer, one-on-one counselling is not always easily accessible for some cancer patients and their carers. CCP Inc's focus is to diminish the emotional burden of cancer by improving access to one-on-one counselling and so facilitate better emotional outcomes for clients and their families.

CCP Inc believes that in order to achieve its vision, it needs to support those affected by cancer, the community in general and its own members.

## **Our Mission**

### ***For Clients:***

- To offer professional and accredited counselling services to anyone diagnosed with cancer, their families and carers.
- To improve access to counselling services through provision of a network of professional counsellors and develop funding resources to assist patients with financial constraints.
- To provide these services in a way that enhances the medical treatment being provided.
- To provide links to support groups, specialist resources and allied health professionals.

### ***For the Community:***

- To provide professional counselling services through a network of medical and counselling professionals who have experience of the hardships faced by those affected by cancer.
- To build awareness of the value of emotional support to promote wellbeing and healthier outcomes.

### ***For Our Members:***

- To enhance the recognition and accreditation of CCP Inc and allied bodies.
- To promote access to members by way of referral and publicity of the work of the organisation.
- To provide a framework of ethical guidelines to facilitate good counselling outcomes.
- To promote specialist training for members.
- To provide opportunities for supervision.
- To develop networking and peer review opportunities.
- To circulate news and items of interest for our members.
- To maintain the highest standards of ethics and ensure that our members comply with these standards.
- To encourage ongoing professional development in the field of cancer related issues.

## **Our Ethics**

The purpose of our Ethics Code is to establish minimum standards of ethical practice for Psychotherapists and Counsellors (members) for the information and protection of those using their services. These ethics are based on the Ethical Guidelines published by PACFA, an industry body representing counselling and psychotherapy associations across Australia.

Regardless of the wide range of approaches preferred by individual psychotherapists and counsellors, there are common ethical issues. Our Ethical Principles form the basis of the relationship between counsellor and client as detailed below.

### **Ethical Principles:**

- Counsellors respect the essential humanity, worth and dignity of all people and promote this value in their work.
- Counsellors recognise and respect diversity among people and oppose discrimination and oppressive behaviour.
- Counsellors respect the privacy of their clients and preserve the confidentiality of information acquired in the course of their work.
- Counsellors protect the rights of their clients including the right to informed consent.
- Counsellors take steps to maintain and develop their competence throughout their professional lives.
- Counsellors abide by the laws of the society in which they practice.

### **Criteria for Membership**

At present we only have one category of membership.

### **Clinical Membership**

- At least 2 years post qualifying as a counsellor or therapist.
- More than one year's experience of working professionally in oncology or more than one year's experience in counselling people affected by cancer.
- Clinical member of CAPA, PACFA, ACA, APS, RANZCP or AASW.
- Registered with an ABN.
- Current professional indemnity insurance.
- Willing to abide by the CCP Inc's Code of Ethics.
- Provide proof of two days (14 hours) cancer-specific training for each two-year membership period, in addition to proof of Professional Associate Membership and Professional Indemnity Insurance.

A new membership category, Intern Psycho-Oncology Counsellor, is being developed and should be finalised by mid 2015. This would be for potential CCP Inc members who have the appropriate psychological and counselling qualifications but who do not yet have enough oncology and palliative care experience. Such members would be able to access our training but would not be able to receive client referrals from Cancer Council NSW.

### **Assisted Services**

As part of CCP Inc's mission, discussions were held with the Cancer Council NSW in 2005 with a view to offering counselling to the broader community within NSW, including assistance for those faced with financial constraints. Details of this scheme are provided below.

### **Cancer Council NSW Counselling Project**

Counsellors who meet the criteria for Clinical Membership of CCP Inc and register for the scheme will be placed on a Cancer Council NSW database. CCNSW uses this database to

match clients with counsellors by location or, alternatively, with counsellors who offer telephone or internet counselling. CCNSW then approaches the relevant counsellor with the referral. If the counsellor is able to take on the client, the counsellor and client make their own arrangements for sessions.

CCNSW negotiates the fee with a client before referral to a counsellor. Clients are informed that sessions cost \$100 each and that they can have up to six sessions under this scheme. Counsellors in the project charge no more than \$100 per session, regardless of their usual fee rate. For those clients in financial difficulty, sessions can be subsidised by an amount negotiated by CCNSW and the client. Counsellors are informed of the subsidy at the time of referral and clients pay the balance direct to the counsellor. Clients cannot request a particular counsellor, and counsellors cannot get clients already using their service to request assistance with cost of counselling.

Both client and counsellor will be required to complete documentation at the end of the final session as part of the project evaluation. Counsellors will receive payment from CCNSW when they return the paperwork and a tax invoice, which must include their ABN. The client and counsellor can at any time interval agree the six sessions. No more than six sessions per client can be offered as part of this project, whether clients pay full fees or receive subsidised fees.

Clients and counsellors who wish to continue the counselling relationship may only do so after completing the project evaluation forms. At this point the CCNSW takes no responsibility for the relationship.

### **Cancer Council NSW Counselling Project Counsellor Eligibility Criteria**

- Full Clinical Membership of Cancer Counselling Professionals Inc.
- Awareness and willingness to abide by the Cancer Council NSW position of working only within a framework that supports the use of cancer treatments and symptom relief that have been scientifically tested and proven safe and effective. The Cancer Council NSW does not support 'alternative therapies'.

### **Membership Fees**

A two year membership period applies and the membership fee is \$200 (\$100 per year or part thereof).

Cancer Counselling Professionals Inc aims to provide a specialised counselling service for those affected by cancer. For this reason, all Clinical Members must meet CCP Inc's Eligibility Criteria.

All applications are reviewed by at least two members of the Executive with an oncology background. If there is any doubt about an applicant's eligibility, CCP Inc will contact the applicant to assess their understanding of cancer, its treatments and the psychosocial impact of cancer.

Thank you for your interest in joining Cancer Counselling Professionals NSW INC.

For further information or enquiries, please contact:

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