



Foundations in Oncology Nursing Practice

COURSE SYLLABUS

2025

Course Facilitator: Donalda MacDonald
Margaret Forbes

Course Author: Donalda MacDonald, Margaret Forbes, Philiz Goh, Inara Karrei, and
Komal Patel-Saini

Course Format: eLearning

Contact Information

Facilitator: Donalda MacDonald - Donalda.MacDonald@desouzainstitute.com

Margaret Forbes – Margaret.Forbes@desouzainstitute.com

Technical Support: support@desouzainstitute.com

Registration: Required

Eligibility: Available to all registered nurses working along the cancer care continuum.

Prerequisite: None

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This 16 week online course will introduce nurses to the art and science of oncology nursing practice. Oncology patients receive care from all health care settings - including acute care teaching hospitals, tertiary care centres, general hospitals and community settings. Given the increasing complexity of this growing patient population, caring for people with cancer and their families involves a particular set of advanced skills and knowledge.

This course will introduce nurses to essential concepts in oncology nursing practice and provide fundamental information to those who work with oncology patients.

Although learners can complete the various components of the course at their own pace, the course must be **completed in its entirety** within **sixteen weeks** of the course start date (this date can be found on the course information page in *My Account*).

Domain of Practice	Treatment and Delivery of Evidence Based Care
Learning Hours	40 hours
de Souza Credit	0.75 credits

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Explain cell biology and genetics in both the cancer process and throughout all stages of the cancer trajectory
- Summarize the disease process for the major types of cancers in Canada
- Compare and contrast the various oncologic emergencies and associated manifestations of symptoms
- Describe the psychosocial impact of cancer including screening for distress, sexuality and survivorship issues
- Discuss six common symptoms of cancer and its treatment (fatigue, nausea and vomiting, constipation, diarrhea, myelosuppression and peripheral neuropathy)

C. MODE OF LEARNING: eLearning

The eLearning environment fosters a self-directed approach. You can progress through the modules and exercises at a convenient time, at home or work. The course timetable in Section H on pages 6-8 of the course syllabus outlines weekly expectations for participants.

- Learning and application: Sections and modules were developed by the de Souza education team to reflect the latest knowledge in Oncology Practice. The content is up-to-date and includes interactive application exercises and links to the latest clinical guidelines.
- Study Guides: Each course section has a printable study guide that you can print and fill in as you progress through the interactive course modules.

D. MODES OF EVALUATION

As part of the evaluation process, you are required to complete the following:

- **A baseline evaluation**: this survey assesses your knowledge, attitude, and confidence before you begin the eLearning modules for the course.
- eLearning modules/units/sections, required readings, and tests.
- Knowledge assessment (participants must complete the following):
 - **Sections 1-4**
Participants must complete a 35 question quiz with a score of at least 70%.
Participants will have a maximum of two attempts for this quiz.
 - **Section 5 (Cancer Sites)**
Participants must complete quizzes with a score of at least 70% in **each of the four** disease sites.
Participants will have a maximum of two attempts per quiz.
 - **Section 6 (Symptom Management)**
Participants must complete quizzes with a score of at least 70% in **each of the six** case studies.
Participants will have a maximum of two attempts per quiz.
 - **Section 7 (Oncological Emergencies)**
Participants must complete a 15 question quiz with a score of at least 80% (12/15 questions = 80%).
Participants will have a maximum of two attempts for this quiz.
- **Post evaluation**: At the end of the course, you will be required to complete the online post course evaluation through eLearning.

When you have successfully met all the above requirements, within two business days, you will receive an email containing instructions on how to download your certificate of completion and will receive credit towards obtaining your de Souza designation.

E. COMPETENCIES

A number of competencies will be evident within each module and encompasses both the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology and the College of Nurses of Ontario Standards of Practice.

College of Nurses of Ontario Standards

- Accountability
- Continuing competence
- Knowledge
- Knowledge application
- Leadership
- Relationships
- Professional relationships

Standards & guidelines link:

<http://www.cno.org/en/learn-about-standards-guidelines/standards-and-guidelines/>

Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology:

- Comprehensive health assessment
- Supportive and therapeutic relationships
- Management of cancer symptoms and treatment side effects
- Teaching and coaching
- Facilitating continuity of care/ navigating the system
- Decision-making and advocacy
- Professional practice and leadership

[CANO Practice Standards](#)

[Standards for Specialized Oncology Nurse](#)

F. TIME REQUIREMENT AND EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

To be successful in completing this course, you are encouraged to set aside 2 to 3 hours each week to complete each section as learning is primarily self-directed. The total learning hours for this course is 40 hours.

Sections and modules are to be completed sequentially; participants can choose to go ahead and complete learning activities in multiple sections and modules at once, however, all course requirements must be completed within 16 weeks.

If you have vacation planned within the timeframe, ensure that you include that time away in your schedule to complete all modules.

Your course activity completion will be reflected in your grade book. You will be expected to complete all seven sections/ modules through the eLearning system. It is strongly recommended for participants not to plan a vacation during the course period.

G. FACILITATOR AVAILABILITY

Facilitators for this course will be responsible for answering questions related to course content and will be available to you for questions throughout the course. You can expect a response within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend. You can contact either Donalda.MacDonald@desouzainstitute.com or Margaret.Forbes@desouzainstitute.com.

Technical support is available by contacting support@desouzainstitute.com.

H. FACILITATORS AND AUTHORS BIOGRAPHIES

Facilitators and Authors

Donalda MacDonald, RN, CON(C)

Donalda has been an oncology nurse for 50 years working in both inpatient and outpatient units. She has been a primary nurse in lung and GI oncology as well as worked in the chemotherapy suite. For the last 10 years of her clinical career, she has been the solo instructor for the Sinai C.A.R.E. Cancer Care education series that she and her chemo colleagues developed targeting nurses new to oncology. She has been an educator at de Souza for the past 15 years. Donalda has served on the board of directors for the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology for 7 years. Donalda holds certification in oncology from the CNA. She has done item writing and exam review for the CNA Oncology Certification Exam. Donalda was nominated by her oncology peers and was one of 100 nurses from across Canada to receive the CNA Centennial Award honoring her work in education of novice oncology nurses. In 2014 she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology. She was the recipient of the Pfizer Award of Excellence in Education in 2023.

Margaret Forbes, RN-EC, MN, NP-Adult, CON(C)

Margaret is a nurse practitioner with more than 30 years of oncology experience. She recently practiced as a nurse practitioner in complex malignant hematology including stem cell transplant and cellular therapies at the Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre. Margaret also has clinical experience in the treatment and management of people with solid tumour malignancies, specifically breast cancer. Margaret has held various nursing leadership roles most recently as a nurse practitioner lead in complex malignant hematology. She was the clinical lead in the development of the cancer survivorship program at the Juravinski Cancer Centre. In 2016, Margaret was the recipient of the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO-ACIO) Pfizer Award of Excellence in Nursing Leadership. In 2018, Margaret led the development of the Ron and Nancy Clark Nurse Practitioner Fellowship in Hematology at the Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre. Margaret has participated in research as both a co-principal investigator and co-investigator in multiple studies. Margaret is an assistant clinical professor at McMaster University School of Nursing. She has recently joined the de Souza Institute as an advanced practice nurse educator. Margaret believes that a strong foundation in oncology knowledge will inspire nurses and other health care providers to become confident, competent and enthusiastic about providing excellence in the care of people and their families who experience cancer.

Authors

Philiz Goh, RN, MN, CON(C) – Oncologic Emergencies

Philiz began her nursing career in a surgical oncology inpatient unit at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and moved into the outpatient setting to care for breast cancer patients in all stages of their cancer journey, including medical, surgical, radiation, survivorship and palliative. She is certified in Oncology with the Canadian Nurses Association and has a Masters of Nursing in Health Systems Leadership and Administration from the University of Toronto. Philiz has been in multiple leadership roles within the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO/ACIO) such as the first student chapter executive, president of the Toronto chapter, and the director of communications on the CANO/ACIO board. She is currently an advanced practice nurse educator at the de Souza Institute. Philiz has always believed in teaching and mentoring nurses and other health professionals to provide the best quality patient care for people and their caregivers experiencing cancer as well as for accessible programs/events/spaces.

Inara Karrei, RN, BScN, Med, CON(C) – Lung Cancer

Inara Karrei has been an oncology/hematology nurse for over 40 years. For most of her career, she was a Nurse Educator for the Ottawa Hospital Cancer Program. She has worked in both the in-patient and out-patient settings. She established that hospital's initial PICC program and has been instrumental in increasing the knowledge and skills of nurses in various parts of Canada in the selection and management of the various central venous access devices seen in oncology and hematology patients. She was a frequent member of various oncology nursing advisory boards and guest lecturer in various professional education venues. She is a graduate of the University of Ottawa and holds a Bachelor of Nursing Science degree and a Masters in Education from that

institution. She holds the Canadian Nurses Association Certification in Oncology Nursing. Inara currently participates as a facilitator for the de Souza Provincial Standardized Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Course.

Komal Patel-Saini, RN(EC), MN, CON(C), CHPCN(C), GNC(C) – Prostate Cancer

Komal began her nursing career at William Osler Health System in Brampton, Ontario in 2006 on an in-patient oncology unit where she has had the opportunity to provide direct patient care, precept nursing students, mentor nurses, and educate healthcare professionals throughout the organization. Komal values lifelong learning and has demonstrated this in many professional activities nationally and internationally. Komal has completed an RNAO clinical fellowship that focused on Oncology and Palliative Pain and Symptom Management. She holds a BScN from the University of Windsor, Masters in Nursing with a teaching focus from Athabasca University, and Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Diploma from Athabasca University. She obtained her Oncology CNA certification in 2010, Hospice Palliative Care CNA certification in 2012 Gerontology CNA certification in 2019. Komal is also one of the first de Souza APNs in Ontario.

I. COURSE TIMELINE

The following sections/modules are to be completed in sequential order according to numerical identifier. The course timeline below is just a guide to help those participants who require a guide. It is the participant's responsibility to ensure that all course requirements are completed within 16 weeks of the date you started the course.

Section	Topic/Module	Post Date	Date to complete
Introduction	eLearning Center Orientation	Within 1 st week of the course	Completion by the end of 1 st week
Baseline Survey	Participant Baseline Survey	Within 1 st week of the course	Completion by the end of 1 st week
1: Cancer	Cell Biology	Within 1 st week of the course	Completion by the end of 1 st week
	Hematology and Normal Lab Values	Within 1 st week of the course	Completion by the end of 1 st week
	Carcinogenesis	Within 2 nd week of the course	Completion by the end of 2 nd week
	Canadian Cancer Statistics	Within 2 nd week of the course	Completion by the end of 2 nd week
2: Diagnosis and Staging	Diagnosis	Within 3 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 3 rd week
	Diagnostic Testing	Within 3 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 3 rd week
	Staging	Within 4 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 4 th week
3: Treatment of Cancer	Principles of Treatment	Within 4 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 4 th week
	Surgery	Within 4 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 4 th week

	Radiation	Within 5 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 5 th week
	Chemotherapy and Biotherapy	Within 6 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 6 th week
	Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant	Within 7 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 7 th week
4: Psychosocial Oncology	Screening for Distress	Within 8 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 8 th week
	Sexuality	Within 8 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 8 th week
	Survivorship	Within 8 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 8 th week
5. Cancer Sites	Lung Cancer	Within 9 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 9 th week
	Breast Cancer	Within 10 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 10 th week
	Colorectal Cancer	Within 11 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 11 th week
	Prostate Cancer	Within 12 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 12 th week
6: Symptom Management	Assessment of Symptoms	Within 13 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 13 th week
	Fatigue	Within 13 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 13 th week
	Nausea and Vomiting	Within 13 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 13 th week
	Constipation	Within 13 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 13 th week

	Diarrhea	Within 14 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 14 th week
	Myelosuppression and Neutropenia	Within 14 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 14 th week
	Peripheral Neuropathy	Within 14 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 14 th week
7. Oncological Emergencies		Within 15 th week of the course	Completion by the end of 16 th week
Final Evaluation	Complete once all course sections and evaluations have been completed. Complete by course end date (16th week).		

Additional Information Regarding Learning at de Souza Institute

A. VIRTUAL LIBRARY

de Souza Institute has a virtual library that can be accessed to those registered in this course or any other de Souza Institute continuing education program. This resource enables you to access over 1500 e-Journals, 200 e-books and 8 on-line databases such as CINHALL or Ovid-Medline. You can use the virtual library to access the required reading materials for your course. The virtual library can be accessed 24 hours a day at any location that has internet access using a login and password.

The direct link is <https://library.desouzainstitute.com/login>.

B. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

eLearning Centre Orientation

The eLearning Centre Orientation is designed to introduce you to online learning and to help you understand how to navigate through the de Souza Institute eLearning centre and courses. It is strongly recommended that you complete this orientation so that you will be able to successfully navigate de Souza's eLearning environment.

de Souza Support

If you have questions about the content of a course please email your course facilitator.

If you need assistance accessing or navigating the eLearning Centre, please refer to the eLearning Orientation course. If you have questions or have any general technical difficulties please contact support@desouzainstitute.com.

C. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Click the links below to review de Souza's Policies.

[Academic Honesty and Copyright Policy](#)

[Cancellations, Incomplete and No Show Policy](#)

[Request for Accommodation Policy](#)

Course content and resources provided in this course are based on best practice guidelines from provincial and national bodies. Please consult your educator if you have specific questions related to local protocols and policies as they vary among healthcare organizations.