



Management of Depression and Anxiety in Cancer

COURSE SYLLABUS

2024

Course Facilitator: Self Directed Learning

Course Author: Dr. Madeline Li, MD PhD FRCP(C)

Course Offering: de Souza Institute

Course Format: eLearning

Contact Information: support@desouzainstitute.com

Registration: Required

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Management of Depression and Anxiety in Cancer course was created in collaboration between Cancer Care Ontario (CCO). This course consists of six online modules promoting an evidence-based wholistic approach to care and management of depression and anxiety in individuals with cancer. The content and structure of the course is based on the *Pan-Canadian Practice Guideline: Screening, Assessment and Management of Psychosocial Distress, Major Depression and Anxiety in Adults with Cancer* (Version 2, 2015).

The following areas are covered in the modules:

- Prevalence and risk factors for anxiety and depression in cancer patients
- The bio-psycho-social etiology and pathophysiology of anxiety and depression
- Elements involved in initial screening, comprehensive assessment and focused assessment
- Assessing risk of immediate harm
- Assessing various levels of distress severity
- Clinical pathway based on distress severity
- Psychosocial treatment options
- Pharmacological treatment options
- Practical team-based interventions across the continuum of emotional distress

This course has been designed for front-line providers, including physicians; nurses; and allied health care providers. Participants will have **5 weeks** to complete the course.

Domain of Practice	Treatment and Delivery of Evidence Based Care
Learning Hours	10 hours
de Souza Credit	0.25 credits

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course covers core competencies outlined in the Pan-Canadian Practice Guideline.

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

- Identify risk factors for anxiety and depression
- Explain the elements involved in initial screening and comprehensive assessment
- Describe the utility of validated anxiety and depression rating scales
- Discriminate pathological states from adaptive anxiety
- Describe common anxiety disorders in cancer
- Explain how major depression is diagnosed in a patient with cancer
- Explain how distress severity determine treatment interventions
- Recognize when to refer to psychosocial specialist
- List the non-pharmacological and pharmacological approaches for the management and treatment of depression and anxiety

- Raise awareness among colleagues regarding the clinical significance of anxiety and depression to support stigma reduction for patients
- Utilize supportive counselling tips for emotional distress across all phases of the cancer journey

C. MODE OF LEARNING

The main mechanisms to facilitate learning in this course will entail eLearning.

eLearning

eLearning, offered through the de Souza eLearning centre, will cover the following activities: the application of knowledge and self-directed reading assignments. The eLearning environment fosters a self-directed approach for participants to progress through the modules at a convenient time, either at home or work.

- Learning and application: Sections and modules are developed by de Souza education team to reflect the latest knowledge in depression and anxiety care and management. The content is up to date and the learning format is interactive.
- Readings are intended to enhance the eLearning content surrounding key topic areas.
- Technical support will be provided throughout the course.

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, confidence, and learning methods before you begin the eLearning modules for the course.
- eLearning modules: It is expected that you will complete all activities, case studies within all the modules by the course end date.
- Exit Exam: You must complete and obtain a minimum of 80% on the final multiple choice exam. Participants receive a maximum of two attempts to pass the final exam.
- Post evaluation: At the end of the course, you will be required to complete a post course evaluation. This will be facilitated electronically through eLearning.

When you have successfully met all the above requirements, 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. 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 10 hours.

Your course activity completion will be reflected in your gradebook. You will be expected to complete all sections/ modules through the de Souza eLearning system.

F. COURSE TIMELINE

All sections/modules are to be completed within the **5 week** course offering time period. The course is comprised of the following sections:

Section	Topic	Learning activities	Suggested allotment of time
1	Bio-psycho-social etiology and pathophysiology of anxiety and depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive learning activities: natural course, risk factors, monoamine hypothesis of depression, and inflammatory cytokine hypothesis Unit quiz 	1.0 hour
2	Screening for Anxiety and Depression, Assessing and Managing Suicidal Ideation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive learning activities: rationale for distress screening, barriers and myths, practice guide algorithm, team role Video: assessing and managing suicidal ideation and distinguishing it from the rational wish for physician assisted dying, or the desire for hastened death in cancer patients Unit quiz 	2.0 hours
3	Comprehensive and Focused Assessment of Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive learning activities: general approach in assessment, validated scales for anxiety assessment Case examples: assessment for mild, moderate, severe anxiety Unit quiz 	2.0 hours
4	Comprehensive and Focused Assessment of Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive learning activities: depression assessment, diagnosis and differential diagnosis, complexities of diagnosing depression in cancer Case examples: assessment for mild, moderate, severe depression Video: assessing depression Unit quiz 	2.0 hours
5	Psychosocial and Pharmacological Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive learning activities: care pathway, stepped care model, psychosocial treatments, pharmacotherapy, combined treatment, antidepressant classes, factors to consider when initiating antidepressant Case examples: managing distressed cancer patients with language barrier & complex psychosocial needs Unit quiz 	2.0 hours
6	Team-based Best Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive learning activities: supportive counselling tips, brief structured therapies, burn out and compassion fatigue Video: empathic communication Unit quiz 	1.0 hour
Final Exam (Multiple Choice Questions)			

G. FACILITATOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Madeline Li is a professor in the Department of Psychiatry, University Health Network and a clinician scientist in the Department of Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Care, Princess Margaret Hospital. She completed her MD/PhD at the Ontario Cancer Institute, followed by a residency and fellowship in psychiatric oncology at the University of Toronto. In addition to her clinical practice in cancer psychiatry, she conducts collaborative research in the areas of psychoneuroimmunology, genetics and psychosocial cancer research. She is the developer and physician lead of the Distress Assessment and Response Tool program at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre and the Psychosocial Oncology Clinical Lead for South Central LHIN.

I. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

eLearning Centre Orientation

If this is the first time you are taking a course offered by de Souza Institute, please complete the eLearning Centre Orientation course (free of charge). This course is designed to introduce you to online learning and 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 you will be able to successfully navigate de Souza's eLearning environment.

de Souza Institute 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.

J. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

[Academic Honesty and Copyright Policy](#)

[Cancellation, 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.