



FACT SHEET

SOLARISCARE FOUNDATION

BACKGROUND

The SolarisCare Foundation Cancer Support Centres provide a safe and welcoming place where cancer patients and their carers have “a soft place to land” to receive information and choose a complementary therapy from a range of over 15 therapies provided by volunteer professional therapists.

The Cancer Support Centres are integrated with mainstream medical care and aim to provide patients with practical skills to cope with the emotional and physical side effects of chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery. Offering support, educational material and complementary therapy sessions, (e.g. massage, reiki, counselling) for anyone who has been diagnosed with cancer and is receiving treatment, regardless of age, gender, type of cancer, or socio economic status. It is the first of its kind Australia.

Dr David Joske, Head of Haematology, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital founded the SolarisCare Foundation in September 2001 for the specific purpose of providing integrated and supportive care to all people with cancer, their families and carers in Western Australia. These centres are located at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and St John of God Hospital Subiaco with a third to open in Bunbury in 2010 to support regional cancer patients and their carers.

The SolarisCare Foundation relies totally on the generosity of the Western Australian community for funding to ensure these valuable services are maintained and expanded.

WHAT ARE COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES?

Complementary therapies are those treatments given in conjunction with standard mainstream cancer treatments of surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Complementary therapies are used in addition to traditional mainstream treatments to provide supportive care to patients, and are not recommended as a replacement for mainstream treatments. Please refer to the therapies section for a detailed description of each therapy.

Touch based Complementary therapies used at the Centres are focused on treating the emotional as well as the physical needs of each person. No oral medication or supplements are given out by the Centres so as to ensure that all therapies are working in harmony with standard mainstream treatments. Please see our schedule for details of [therapies available](#).

A distinction is often made between “alternative therapies,” being those therapies used instead of mainstream therapies, and “complementary therapies”, being those therapies used alongside mainstream therapies.

DO THESE COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY TREATMENTS CLASH WITH MY MAINSTREAM TREATMENT?

No. Similar institutions overseas have shown that providing complementary therapies in a non-clinical environment alongside mainstream therapies can produce positive results for patients.

HOW MANY COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY TREATMENTS CAN I HAVE?

Cancer patients and their carers may attend individual therapies (approximately one per week), group activities and counselling for the duration of their medical treatment programme. A programme of therapies on offer is available from each Centre.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST FOR A TREATMENT?

Treatments are provided free of charge. However, donations are greatly appreciated as we are a self-funding foundation.

WHO IS ENTITLED TO MAKE USE OF THE CENTRE'S FACILITIES?

Any cancer patient in Western Australia, their immediate family and carers can avail themselves of services at SCGH which is a public hospital. People using the services of the **SCGH Centre** don't need to be patients at SCGH. The **SJOG centre** at Subiaco, a private hospital, is open only to patients at SJOG centre and their families and carers.

WILL YOU INFORM MY DOCTOR THAT I AM RECEIVING COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY TREATMENT?

Not unless you want us to, and only with your permission. Confidentiality and privacy are maintained at all times.

DO I NEED A DOCTOR'S REFERRAL?

No. Confidentiality and privacy are maintained at all times.

ARE ALL THE THERAPISTS QUALIFIED IN THEIR FIELDS?

Yes, all therapists are accredited professionals. Information about the qualifications of all therapists is available at all Centres.

DO I NEED TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR A TREATMENT?

Yes. The services of the therapists are very popular and as we don't like to disappoint anyone wishing to have an appointment it is advisable to book ahead.

WHEN ARE THE CENTRES OPEN?

The Centres are open Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 4.30pm.

WHY WOULD I VISIT THE CENTRES?

If you or a loved one needs some support whether it be support for 1 day or 1 year, we provide a drop-in Centre at two hospital locations (Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and St John of God, Subiaco). So you can call in to visit at any time during opening hours to talk with our volunteers.

The Centres provides supportive care to patients diagnosed with cancer, as well as during and after cancer treatment. The Centres also provides links to and information about other support groups in the community, access to research programs, the internet and information about cancer and treatments.

HOW ARE THE CENTRES FUNDED?

The Support Centres are self funded and rely on donations from the general public, fundraising events and community partnerships to fund its services and research programs. If you are interested in being involved in fundraising events or to make a donation, please contact our Fundraising, Marketing and PR Manager on 9388 9788 for further information.

ARE COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES PROVEN TO WORK?

It depends on the type of complementary therapy. There is evidence to show that touch based complementary therapies, as used by the SolarisCare Cancer Support Centres, play a real part in improving the well being of people with serious illness.

The Support Centres own research is showing that the model we are using to deliver complementary therapies is proving very successful at improving 'quality of life' and 'symptom control' for patients and carers. Further research is needed, however, to show how it is achieving this.