



2025 POGO MULTIDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIUM ON CHILDHOOD CANCER

AYA Workshop - Practical tips and resource list

Take home points

1. **AYA with cancer have distinct needs**
Their medical and psychosocial challenges differ significantly from those of younger children and older adults.
2. **Adopt a developmentally informed, teen-tailored approach**
Align care with their stage of growth and independence to better address these unique needs.

Practical tips

1. **Prioritize Confidential, Inclusive Care**
Whenever possible, dedicate part of the visit to seeing teens alone. If space or time is limited, get creative—integrate it naturally into the visit flow so it feels routine and normalized.
2. **Use Structured Tools for a Comprehensive Assessment**
Leverage templates that cover key AYA domains, such as **SSHADES**, to ensure you address social, sexual, home, activities, drugs, emotions, and safety.
3. **Validate Their Experiences**
Show empathy and understanding using frameworks like **MOVE** to acknowledge feelings and build trust.
4. **Manage Within Your Scope—Seek Support When Needed**
You don't need all the answers! Do your best and reach out to colleagues or specialists for advice when necessary.
5. **Advocate for Better AYA Care**
Don't give up—encourage your center to strengthen its resources and commitment to adolescent health.

Tips to M.O.V.E. the Conversation



PASS THE MIC

Listen attentively, with curiosity

- Avoid providing advice, solutions or trying to "fix" the problem
- Use encouraging language like "uh-huh", "I see" and "go on" to indicate attention and interest for the person to continue speaking
- Allow for silence



OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-Ended Questions cannot be answered with one word and can elicit more detail

- Try: "Can you tell me more?", "What happened next?", "What was that like for you?"
- Summarize what you've heard to ensure accuracy: "What I'm hearing is...", "Is that right/is that fair?"
- If incorrect, offer an apology and ask for clarification



VALIDATION

Validation is the ability to acknowledge another person's feelings, thoughts or wants, without judgement

- Validation communicates acceptance and reduces emotional responses
 1. Listen for the person's underlying feelings, thoughts, wants
 2. Reflect it back to them: "It makes sense that you're feeling..."
"Most people would think that", "I could see why you'd want..."



EMPATHY

Empathy is the ability to see the world from another person's perspective

- Empathy offers comfort, builds trust and is key to creating a therapeutic relationship
- Cultivate empathy by adopting a non-judgmental stance, passing the MIC (listening), using open-ended questions and validation



Strengths



School



Home



Activities



Drugs/substance use



Emotions/eating



Sexuality/safety

[HEEADSSS 3.0](#): The psychosocial interview for adolescents updated for a new century fueled by media, David A Klein MD MPH, John M Goldenring MD MPH JD, William P Adelman MD, Contemporary Pediatrics, January 01, 2014

Provincially accessible resources

1. [About Kids Health cancer information for teens](#)
2. [Princess Margaret AYA Program](#)
3. [Campfire Circle](#)
4. [Look Good Feel Better](#)
5. [Young Adult Cancer Canada](#)
6. [Gilda's Club](#)
7. [Bounce Back Ontario](#)

Suggested training courses

Fertility and sexual health

1. [ASCO fertility preservation series](#)
2. [De Souza Sexual Health and Cancer](#)
3. [Cancer in Pregnancy | de Souza Institute](#)
4. [Echo Training - The Oncofertility Consortium](#)

Psychosocial care

1. [Canteen AYA Psychosocial Training Program](#)
2. [Princess Margaret Cancer Campus: Return to Work](#)
3. [Princess Margaret Cancer Campus: Brain Fog](#)

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