

Enhancing Cancer Care Navigation for Individuals Living with SPMI

Barriers, Collaborative Strategies and Future Opportunities

Krysia Theriault, CNS MN, BComm, CPMHN(C)®

Presenter Disclosure

Speaker: Krysia Theriault

Relationships with financial sponsors: not applicable

Acknowledgements



Objectives

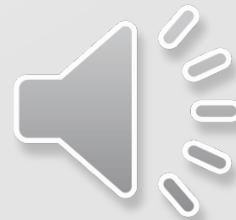
- Identify barriers to navigating cancer care for individuals living with SPMI
- Explore practical strategies that are collaborative and person-centred
- Propose a *model of care* to support the cancer care journey for individuals living with SPMI



In your experience, what barriers have your patients faced that made it difficult for them to navigate the healthcare system?

Lived Experience

- Perceived lack of empathy and concern
- Disrespect for time
- Communication style and approach
- Financial prioritization over care
- Stigma and negative assumptions
- Fairness and respect
- Professional ethics and accountability
- Humanizing care



Barriers

System	Provider	Patient
Fragmentation	Stigma	Symptoms
Resources	Diagnostic overshadowing	Social determinants of health
Guideline limitations	Frustration	Experiences

Lived Experience

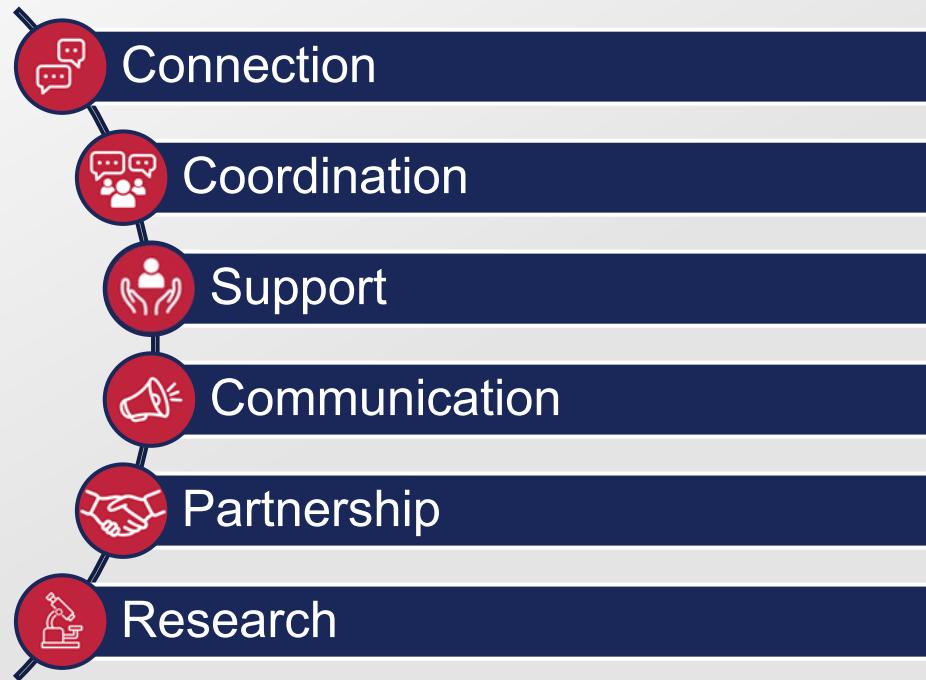
- Compassionate care
- Anticipation of needs
- Cancer impact on mental well-being
- Trauma-informed care
- Identification of strengths



Collaborative Strategies



Model of Care





11 Copilot. (2025, November 23). *AI-generated image of a fox*. Microsoft Copilot.

References

Bridging the Gaps: Taking Care of the Whole Person. (2022). *Oncology*, 36(7) <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/bridging-gaps-taking-care-whole-person/docview/2802943286/se-2>

Caring for Patients With Serious Mental Illness: Guide for the Oncology Clinician. (2022). *Oncology*, 36(7) <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/caring-patients-with-serious-mental-illness-guide/docview/2802943338/se-2>

Grassi, L., McFarland, D., & Riba, M. (2023). The Risk and The Course of Cancer Among People with Severe Mental Illness. *Clinical practice and epidemiology in mental health : CP & EMH*, 19(Suppl-1), e174501792301032. <https://doi.org/10.2174/17450179-v17-e211208-2021-HT2-1910-8>

Leahy, D., Donnelly, A., Irwin, K., & D'Alton, P. (2021). Barriers and facilitators to accessing cancer care for people with significant mental health difficulties: A qualitative review and narrative synthesis. *Psycho-Oncology (Chichester, England)*, 30(12), 2012-2022. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pon.5848>

Murphy, J. F., Amin, L. B., Celikkaleli, S. T., Brown, H. E., & Tapan, U. (2024). Disparities in cancer care in individuals with severe mental illness: A narrative review. *Cancer Epidemiology*, 93, 102663. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.canep.2024.102663>

Teotonio, I. (2017, September 18). *People with schizophrenia live shorter lives than most others*. Toronto Star. <https://www.pressreader.com/canada/toronto-star/20170918/281900183383873>

Vendelsøe, A. N. H., Stie, M., Hjorth, P., Søndergaard, J., Hansen, D. G., & Jensen, L. H. (2025). "I just felt that everything came tumbling down around me"—Barriers in cancer care for patients with severe mental illness: A qualitative study. *PLoS One*, 20(1), e0314313. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0314313>