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## Background

Cancer survivors have unmet needs, particularly at the end of treatment. Physically, there may be long-term treatment effects for example fatigue and pain, and ongoing limitations to activities of daily living<sup>1</sup>. Even with research-based recommendations, many cancer survivors remain inactive<sup>2</sup>.

Psychologically, survivors have to come to terms with the impact of cancer on their relationships, education and employment; their body image and self-confidence. Higher than normal levels of anxiety, stress and depression are frequently reported<sup>3</sup>.

Adults receiving cancer treatments in the UK often have limited access to tailored physical and psychological rehabilitation and variable interim support to help them navigate their returning to exercising using universal services.

## Social connection

- A positive impact of social support and connectedness during and post-treatment, on pain and depressive symptoms and on quality of life has been shown<sup>4</sup>.

## Surfing

- Physically challenging and exhilarating.
- **Blue mind**<sup>5</sup> describes the positive psychological impact of water based activities ‘Being near, in, on, or under the water, sets us at ease. It makes us happier, healthier, and more connected’.

## Yoga & Meditation

- Mindfulness-based interventions improve cancer psychological outcomes; depression, distress, anxiety and quality of life, sleep and fatigue<sup>6</sup>.

## Objective

- To develop a participant centred multi-modal survivorship programme tailored to adults living with the effects of cancer and its treatment.

## Aims

- To access the physical and psychological benefits of spending time in open water.
- To utilise yoga, meditation and breathwork to improve upon psychological wellbeing.
- To enable participants to step out-side of their comfort zones in a supported and safe environment.
- To include group talking therapy and wellbeing activities to foster connections between participants.

## References

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## Methods

### Feasibility pilot

- Set in Newquay, Cornwall.
- A one, and a two-day course
- All participants **Recovering After Cancer (RAC)**.
- Courses included 4 key elements



### Expanded pilot

- Four RAC courses
- Two courses for participants **Living With Cancer (LWC)**
- One course for **Carers** of adults with cancer.

## Safety

### Pre-course screening questionnaire

- Captured cancer treatments, side-effects, general physical and psychological health of each participant
- Assessed by a multi-disciplinary team (oncologist, psychologist, surf instructor).
- Individualised adaptations and safety elements implemented.

### Pre-course exercise video

- Developed to support participants with treatment related side-effects and to improve physical strength.

### Standard operation procedures

- Developed for ‘worst case scenarios’ for health and weather related emergencies.

## Participant inclusion criteria

- All adjuvant treatments must be completed >6 months prior to start of the course.
- If on non-immunosuppressive maintenance treatments, participants must be clinically stable *and* written medical consent to attend required.
- Written medical consent required for all participants attending a LWC course.

## Funding

National Lottery Community grant, NatWest: Back Her Business grant, Crowdfunder.



## Outcomes

Between September 2020 and October 2021, nine courses delivered, 59 participants enrolled.

36, 16 and 7 participants enrolled onto a RAC, LWC and course for Carers, respectively.

### Measures

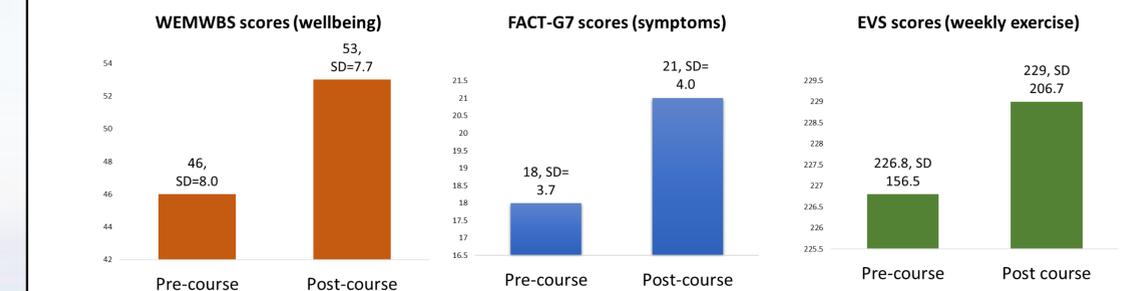
Pre and one-month post course quality measures were obtained from participants attending a RAC course;

- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)
- Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy-General (FACT-G7); assessing cancer symptoms
- Exercise Vital Signs (EVS) score; assessing time spent exercising per week.

Higher scores represent better outcomes.

**Results** 29 participants with breast, 3 gastro-intestinal, 1 lymphoma, 1 prostate, 2 cervix cancers. Compared using paired samples t-tests. Mean age 44.5y (range 28-68 years)

Post-course WEMWBS (p <0.001) and FACT-G7 (p <0.001) scores were significantly higher than pre-course.



## Conclusions

- A bespoke cancer survivorship programme encompassing surfing, yoga/strength building, psychology and wellbeing was developed.
- Improvements in all quality outcomes were achieved.
- In the next 5 years monthly RAC, LWC and Carers courses for participants across the UK will be delivered, guided by experience from the pilot phase, quality measures and participant feedback.
- The ultimate goal is to embed this multimodal programme within NHS cancer-care.

*“A healing therapeutic experience that fills the heart with joy and a feeling of connectedness with other people who have been through the same as you. Life-giving.”*

Recovering After Cancer participant, August 2021

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