

Helping people with concerns about cancer

The Cancer Council Victoria is committed to helping people affected by cancer. Cancer nurse, Edwina Beddoes talks about providing information and emotional support to callers to the Cancer Council Helpline.



As a cancer nurse with more than twenty years oncology experience, Edwina Beddoes knows the importance of providing relevant information and emotional support to people affected by cancer.

She began working on the Cancer Council Helpline five years ago, and describes the Helpline as a critical service that helps people deal with concerns about cancer.

“The Helpline is accessible to anyone worried about cancer”, explains Ms Beddoes. “Callers can ask questions ranging from prevention, diagnosis and treatment, through to living with the side effects of cancer treatments and coping with advanced disease. We address issues with evidence-based information and give callers an opportunity to express their concerns.”

“As calls are caller-focused, some people ring with specific questions that need to be addressed. Other times callers will say, ‘I don’t know what I need to know’, so it’s helpful to ask how they got here.”

With Helpline hours extended to 8.00pm Monday to Friday, Edwina said more people are able to access the service. “Many of the issues callers have are of a sensitive nature, and in the past they have found it difficult to ring with queries because of discomfort ringing due to work commitments and privacy issues. We also receive many calls from carers who, due to the constraints of their caring role, are unable to call until later in the day.”



Edwina says after-hours calls tend to be longer, and many people talk of feeling alone and isolated. “Often callers express the value of feeling heard and being able to say how they feel at that moment. Because the service is anonymous, many callers open up and express feelings, fears and thoughts that they may never have talked about before. By telling their story, callers

can often clarify issues and share their journey.”

The Cancer Council Helpline is a free, confidential service. Telephone 13 11 20
Monday-Friday 8.30am-8.00pm

www.cancervic.org.au



1300 782 231