

The Palliative Care Volunteer Service

How we can help you

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Central Coast Palliative Care Volunteer
Foundation Inc.

The Palliative Care Volunteer Service – How We Can Help

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What is the Palliative Care Volunteer Service?

The Palliative Care Volunteer service is made up of trained volunteers who are here to support patients with a non-curable illness who are under the care of the Palliative Care Service. Additionally the service is also available to support the patient's carer.

Our Palliative Care Volunteers are carefully selected and specially trained. They are skilled listeners who are practical, reliable and caring.

There are a number of services available which are outlined in this brochure.

For more information, speak to your Palliative Care Liaison Nurse or call 4336 7777 to talk with Linde Davis, the Coordinator of Volunteer Services. Linde will be able to answer your questions and assist you with your request.

Volunteer Support Services Available

Support Visit:

Sometimes it can be beneficial to have someone to speak to who is outside of the family, whose feelings you don't have to shield or protect. Our volunteers are there to listen, in an atmosphere of care, confidentiality and respect. Sometimes a one off appointment is all that is needed, whilst for others, ongoing visits that take place weekly or fortnightly are very beneficial. Support visits are provided according to your unique needs.

Social Visit:

For others, just having the company of a volunteer to talk with is what is really needed. Sometimes it's just the presence of the other person, or the opportunity to share something light that brings comfort.

Respite Visit:

Our volunteer service recognises that carers have the need for space to get tasks done. It is also important that carers get much needed time out. While we are not able to provide overnight or long-day respite, our Volunteers are available to provide up to three hours of respite care.

Please note:

While our Palliative Care Volunteers are specially trained, they are not health care practitioners and cannot take the place of nursing staff. They are not able to assist with lifting, personal care or with dispensing medication. They are not associated with home care and therefore do not carry out house work.

Transport to an appointment

A number of our volunteers are available to assist through taking either patients or carers to GP, hospital, specialist, or other health appointments. Where transportation to appointments is needed, the Coordinator will assign a volunteer, who will then contact you and arrange a time to collect and return you to and from your appointment. Please note that this service is available to both patients and carers.

To help us assist you, please give the Coordinator of Volunteers a minimum of two days notice when requesting a volunteer to assist with transportation. Due to the availability of volunteers, there maybe times when we may not be able to provide this service. Please note that volunteers are not allowed to assist with the physical lifting or transferring of patients to and from vehicles.

Assistance with Shopping and/or Social Outing

We have volunteers who are available to assist carers and patients with their shopping, or to take them out for a social outing. Sometimes living with a palliative illness can mean patients are restricted and no longer enjoy outings that were previously taken for granted. In these situations a trip to the local beach, or a ride in the car can provide patients with needed breaks from the confines of their home.

Relaxation/Meditation

Meditation has been shown to have benefits such as in the reduction of stress levels, and in assisting with pain management. The use of relaxation and visualization can bring about feelings of ease and calm which can be highly beneficial.

We have a group of volunteers who are trained in giving relaxation and meditation for patients and their carers. To arrange an appointment – please contact the coordinator of volunteers, who will arrange an appointment for you with a relaxation trained volunteer. These appointments usually take place in the comfort of the patient's own home.

Therapeutic hand & foot massage

Touch through simple hand and foot massage can also assist in imparting feelings of relaxation and respite from stress. Hand and foot massage can be combined with relaxation/meditation sessions or held separately. If you would like massage included please mention this when talking to the volunteer coordinator who can assign you through linking you with a massage trained volunteer.

Bowen Therapy

This technique involves a gentle system of muscle and connective tissue moves, which help to balance the body and stimulate energy flow. The Bowen technique involves frequent pauses through the session that allows the body time to respond. The beauty of this technique is it is non-invasive and causes no trauma to muscles or joints. Additionally Bowen therapy improves circulation and lymphatic drainage and can help ease emotional stresses and aid feelings of wellbeing.

Reflexology

Reflexology is a modality in which specific points on the feet are worked upon that correspond with parts of the body. This deeply relaxing therapy can be beneficial in easing stress related conditions and reduce back and neck pain, headaches/migraines and respiratory conditions.

Please note:

Massage may be contraindicated for patients who have certain conditions. It is advisable to check with your GP or Palliative care liaison nurse before commencing therapeutic massage.

Narrative and Letter writing

We believe that everyone has a story, and one of the services available to our palliative care patients is gaining assistance in telling your story, through help from a Palliative care volunteer. Whether you want to:

- Informally list your thoughts,
- Write messages to those you love for now or a future time,
- Record your life-story,
- Compile funny tales from your life
- Have a go at writing poetry
- Create a journal

Any of the above can be made easier – through the help of a volunteer who can assist you through practical means such as scribing for you, listening and talking with you about your ideas, and bringing a recording device to tape your voice.

Support Centres

The Palliative Care Volunteer Foundation has designed and built two support centres for patients and carers connected with Palliative Care on the Central Coast. Our support centres are at Wyongah (north) and Woy Woy (south). Situated in-between is the Central Coast Palliative Care centre at Long Jetty. These support centres are utilized for numerous activities including:

- Professional Counselling
- Volunteer training
- Patient support groups
- Carer support groups.
- Bereavement support groups

Patient support groups

Facing a non-curative illness can be daunting and challenging. It is not uncommon for people to experience a range of feelings and thoughts in response to their situation. Sometimes feelings and responses can become compounded when people experience them in isolation.

Our patient support groups meet on a fortnightly basis and form an opportunity for patients to meet with others facing similar circumstances. These groups are lead by trained volunteer facilitators, under the supervision of our counselling team.

Our Patient support groups are held in an atmosphere of care, and confidentiality. The group offers a safe place where members are free to talk openly where their experiences and opinions will be valued and respected.

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There is no pressure on group members to speak or share when this does not feel comfortable.

The patient support group offers members an opportunity to learn/experience relaxation through meditation sessions. Attending this part of the program is optional. Light refreshments are provided during the course of the morning.

Carer Support Groups

Over the years we have come to realise that carers need support too, and that their needs are not always recognised or validated.

Like the “patient support groups”, our carer support groups are held in an atmosphere of care and confidentiality. They offer a safe place where carers can share their experiences openly, (as much or as little as they wish), without fear of being judged.

Meeting with other carers can be highly beneficial by countering feelings of isolation whilst offering carers a short respite from their caring role.

Like our “patient support group” – members are offered an opportunity to experience/learn relaxation and meditation techniques. This part of the program is also completely optional.

Light refreshments are served during the course of the morning/session.

Please note:

If you wish to attend a carer support group, but need a volunteer to sit with the person you are caring for, contact the coordinator of volunteers who will arrange a volunteer to assist with a respite visit.

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Final note:

- *All of the services outlined in this brochure are free.*
- *Volunteer services are supported by the “**Central Coast Palliative Care Volunteer Foundation**”, and all donations are welcome.*
- *Group sessions may vary in frequency and meeting times during the year. Please check with the coordinator of volunteers to gain up-to-date timetable information.*
- *The availability of services listed in this brochure will be subject to ongoing volunteer availability, and service demand, and may therefore vary.*
- *Every effort will be made to link patients and carers with available volunteers and volunteer support services requested.*
- *When preparing for a home visit, please ensure that the environment is smoke-free.*
- *Patient’s and carers are free to review their decision to accept volunteer support services at any time.*
- *Please assist us by letting us know if you have a dog, whether large or small. Dogs can be extremely protective of their owners particularly when a family member is unwell, and have been known to attack. We appreciate your cooperation to ensure the safety of our volunteers when visiting your home.*

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CAN YOU HELP ?

The volunteer service is supported by the Central Coast Palliative Care Volunteer Foundation Inc. without which the service could not function. The Foundation is a registered charity and is completely funded by public contributions and donations. Should you wish to assist the volunteer service by making a tax-deductible donation to the Foundation, please complete the form below and send to the Foundation secretary.

A receipt will be sent to you.

I enclose a donation of \$ _____
to the **Central Coast Palliative Care Volunteer Foundation Inc.**
(cheques payable to same)

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

Telephone

SIGNED

Please send a Cheque/Money Order (made payable to: **Central Coast Palliative Care Volunteer Foundation Inc.**)

Please send to:

The Secretary
Central Coast Palliative Care Volunteer
Foundation Inc.
PO Box 4034,
Bay Village NSW 2261

Please don't send cash through mail.

You may also like to check out our website:

<http://palcarefoundation.org.au>

**ALL SUPPORT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED
A RECEIPT WILL BE FORWARDED TO YOU.**