



Understanding Cancer



Artist Statement
Stars and Daffodils

In my research for the artwork, I discovered that the daffodil is the flower adopted by the American Cancer Society as a symbol for hope and renewal. The medicine wheel is a symbol for balance in all aspects of our lives. And the stars in the sky symbolize hope. Hope for the day when cancer is no longer a threat to the lives of our people.

Cassandra Leigh Darrough
Paiute-Shoshone
April 19, 2008



**Developed with and for Community Health Representatives (CHRs)
and Alaska's Community Health Aides/Practitioners (CHA/Ps)
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Understanding Cancer

A cancer education manual developed with and for Community Health Aides/Practitioners, Behavioral Health Aides, Community Health Representatives, and other people interested in learning about cancer.

Section 1 *Self-Care*

Emphasizes the importance of self-care and healthy ways of living.

Section 2 *Wellness Ways to Prevent and Decrease Cancer Risk*

Discusses cancer risk factors and healthy lifestyle choices. Explains the importance of early cancer detection or prevention by having recommended cancer screening exams.

Section 3 *Cancer and Our Genes*

Discusses the role genes play in cancer and the differences among sporadic, familial and hereditary cancers.

Section 4 *Understanding Cancer Basics*

Presents basic cancer information. Discusses possible emotional responses to a cancer diagnosis, types of cancers, methods of diagnosis, and the common medical words used when describing cancer, a cancer diagnosis, and cancer treatment. Some ways to provide comfort and support during a person's cancer journey are also shared.

Section 5 *Cancer Treatments: What to Expect*

Provides information about common cancer treatments, side effects and comfort measures.

Section 6 *Cancer Pain: Assessment and Management*

Provides ways to identify and relieve cancer pain.

Section 7 *Loss, Grief, and End-of-Life Comfort Care*

Discusses loss and grief, and the grieving process. Healthy coping skills are presented.

Resources

Helpful Resources to Learn More

Includes a checklist for evaluating information and helpful organizations to learn more about cancer.

Understanding New Words

Lists definitions of cancer-related words.

Share Your Knowledge *Community Activities*

Presents examples of ways to share cancer knowledge and understanding with the people in your community. Includes directions for a penny game, bingo, and radio show.



WELCOME

Thank you for your willingness to share your wisdom and to learn more about cancer.

As a Community Health Aide and Community Health Practitioner (CHA/P), Community Health Representative (CHR), or a Behavioral Health Aide (BHA) the knowledge and understanding you share with people is very helpful to **make a difference** in the story of cancer in your community. Working together, we can prevent and decrease the incidence of cancer among American Indian and Alaska Native people.

We hope the following information will help you to support the people in your community to understand the ways they can prevent cancer, decrease their cancer risk, and if they are diagnosed with cancer to live well along their cancer journey. No one should have to experience a cancer diagnosis and cancer treatment alone.

As a CHR, CHA/P, BHA you may be asked many questions about cancer. If you do not know the answer to a question, use the resources listed in the 'Helpful Resources' section to learn more. Knowledge and understanding about cancer is continually changing as new research is done. This cancer education manual was updated in 2013. It is good to update and renew cancer information on a regular basis. You may find that cancer information is regularly updated by organizations and websites found in the 'Helpful Resources' section.

Objectives

After completing this cancer education manual, participants will be able to:

Discuss ways to reduce cancer risk, including healthy choices about diet, exercise, alcohol, and tobacco use.

Know recommended cancer screening exams and screening guidelines for breast, cervical, colorectal, prostate, testicular, and skin cancers.

Know possible cancer warning signs using the word C.A.U.T.I.O.N.

Understand basic cancer words including biopsy, malignant, benign, tumor, primary site, metastasis, remission, and stage of cancer.

Discuss cancer treatment (surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy) and side effects.

Know cancer resources to find help and learn more.

Experience ways to share cancer information with community.