

Talking About Cancer Together



Something happens when we start talking about cancer. It is an emotive subject, because there are hidden layers to cancer. Even as a non clinician, I hear people's personal stories, whether it is the journey they have walked personally or a journey walked alongside someone else. In my experience over the 16 months of doing this project, I have found that when people share their stories, in most cases, what they are doing is, trying to make the conversation as real as possible and help people not to avoid talking altogether. Not everyone wants to talk about their personal journey. For those that do, it is the listening ear, the fact that, they somehow want to assure the listener that they are included in the numbers that are living with cancer or that they can testify to the fact that people do live with cancer - that's a good thing. The more people that hear this, the more myths that can be dispelled about cancer.

I have been delivering the card workshop for professionals in different capacities, and I have found that the card game allows people to talk about cancer in an open and frank way. However, as part of the game, participants are required to pick a type of cancer to assign to a fictional character they have just read about. Participants do not find this easy to do, often wanting to pick a 'nice' cancer, if there's such a thing, to give to the character they have become acquainted with.

The more stories of people living with cancer we hear about, the more assured we can become; the more embedded the information and message that, the numbers living with cancer, for longer, are increasing.

People that I have come across, as mentioned earlier, when it comes to cancer, fall into different categories. There are those who have been impacted by cancer either through a personal journey or by watching someone else (a loved one) walk the journey, who are resolved to support others and make their journey easier. There are unsung heroes who work tirelessly

behind the scenes to raise funds, to put packages together like 'Surgery Care Kits' and 'Smile Boxes', to name but a few. There are also those who acknowledge that they are in a unique or privileged position to be able to galvanise others around them to make a difference. They organise events, use the medium of radio and television, social media to champion others in their efforts to make a difference. I am sure there are countless examples that come to mind as you read this.

As I write this, some organisations that come to mind are Sophie's Stars, Breast Friends, Cancer Support Suffolk, Ipswich Community Media, Suffolk Refugee Support, St Peter's Church Stoke Park, not an exhaustive list, by any means, who continue to do incredible work in our communities. There are lots more organisations out there making a difference everyday. What they do helps the people of Suffolk and the services they provide are invaluable.

Out and About

As usual, I have been out and about to villages like Peasenhall and Sweffling, talking to people in the communities. I was part of a group invited to the George Pub in Wickham Market to have a tour around the new wellbeing facility that will be opening soon. The plan is to make the facility available free of charge to organisations offering services to the community.

I attended the University of Suffolk Dental CIC mouth cancer event and took part in their free mouth cancer screening and prevention, on the Be Well Bus. I had the opportunity to talk to some of the staff and students about the Talking About Cancer Together project and observed some students 'carrying out' the mouth screening.

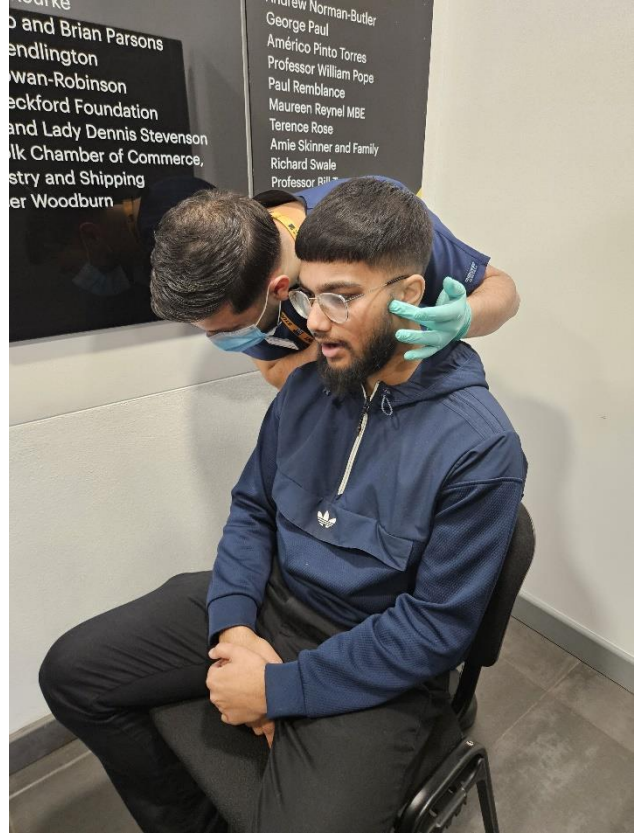
I have also taken part in the Ways to Wellness event organised by Rural Coffee Caravan at the Community Hub in Woodbridge.

The Macmillan Conference

I had the opportunity to attend the Macmillan conference at the OXO Tower in London in October. The event brought together healthcare professionals and representatives from underserved communities who may have had challenging experiences with cancer care. The primary aim of the conference was to ensure attendees from underserved communities were listened to, that attendees made as many meaningful new connections as possible, and were able to share their work and ideas, whilst being inspired to continue collaborating beyond the event to help close the equity gap in cancer care.

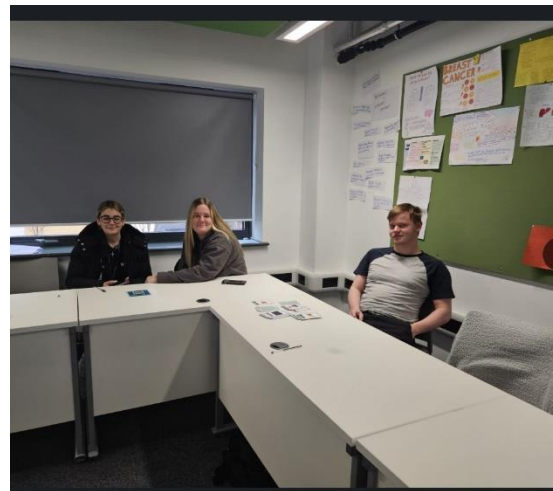
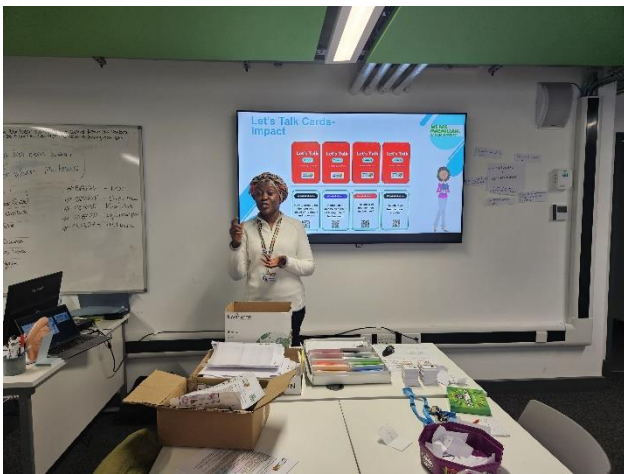






Let's Talk the 'Talking About Cancer Together' card game Workshop

Taking the Let's Talk workshop to organisations and delivering on their premises has meant that more people have been involved in the workshop and engaged in talking about cancer together- this is a different dimension to being out and about. I have had the opportunity and privilege to deliver the workshop to final year Nursing Students at the University of Suffolk and some Health and Social Work students at Suffolk New College. Talking to students who are about to embark on their careers in the community and in the hospital has been encouraging and inspiring.



Volunteering Opportunities- Be part of the project and make a difference.

Did you know that the project has secured a Support Grant from Macmillan to be able to engage the services of volunteers to assist in the project? The volunteer role will suit anyone with some spare time, looking for a worth-while cause at the heart of communities in Suffolk to be a part of. If you are a good communicator and enjoy meeting and talking to new people, this might be for you. You do not have to be a person with lived experience of cancer. You do not need to be a person with a clinical background.

See the CAS website for more details: [Vacancies - Community Action Suffolk](#)

Let's Talk- Cancer Cards

The wait is now over! The finished cards are available for sale on the CAS online shop on CAS' website, for organisations to buy @ £12.50 plus VAT? The workshops are still available for free.

What are the Let's Talk- cancer cards?

These are versatile cards in the form of a card game, that can be used to engage clients and service users in the conversation around cancer. The game allows an otherwise heavy and 'taboo' subject -in some cases- to be discussed in a safe environment.

What do you get?

There is a full set of 172 cards which includes, information about 40 different organisations that can offer help and support services to clients and service users. The set is made up of 4 different packs of 42 cards and 1 information card about where to purchase the cards.



£12.50 - Purchase Excluding 20% tax



Coming up

Why not book yourself on the workshop to see how these versatile cards can be used to encourage the conversation around cancer with your services users!

Let's Talk is an interactive workshop developed as part of the 'Talking About Cancer Together' project for the VCFSE sector.

A cancer training workshop in the form of a card game to equip the VCFSE sector to engage in conversation around cancer with their users.

The aim of the workshop is to engage people in the conversations around cancer in a measured way, in a safe environment.

Attendees will be able to answer the question:

How do I talk about cancer in an environment that does not deal with cancer on the day to day?

How do I enable my community to actively talk about cancer and not avoid it?

How do I ensure the conversation results in delivering a positive message and not induce fear?

How do I remove the taboo from the conversations around cancer?

Use the links below to book a place in the February or April Workshop

https://cas.aidecrm.co.uk/booking/training-booking?event_id=3593

https://cas.aidecrm.co.uk/booking/network-event-booking-form?event_id=3594

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FEBRUARY

LET'S TALK
Cancer WORKSHOP

AN INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE TALKING ABOUT CANCER TOGETHER PROJECT FOR THE VCFSE SECTOR

VENUE: BRIGHTSPACE 160 HADLEIGH ROAD, IP2 0HH
TIME: 10:00-12:00
BOOK YOUR PLACE USING THE QR CODE

COMMUNITY ACTION SUFFOLK
Strengthening the voluntary and community sector

Do you work in the VCFSE Sector?
How do you feel about engaging in conversations around cancer?
This toolkit will equip you with what you need to engage your service users in conversations about cancer in a measured way in a safe environment.

Let's Talk
Cancer

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

24
APRIL

LET'S TALK
Cancer WORKSHOP 2

AN INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE TALKING ABOUT CANCER TOGETHER PROJECT FOR THE VCFSE SECTOR

VENUE: BRIGHTSPACE 160 HADLEIGH ROAD, IP2 0HH
TIME: 10:00-12:00
BOOK YOUR PLACE USING THE QR CODE

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Let's Talk
Cancer

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

Easy Read Version of Let's Talk Cards

Ace Anglia very kindly gave me the opportunity to do the trial of an Easy Read version of the cards, at the Let's Talk about Health meeting at the Kesgrave Community Centre. It was a good interactive session with volunteers, professionals from the sector, clients and of the family members. The feedback received has been very helpful and is being used to produce an easy read version of the Let's Talk card game which will be accessible for people with learning disability and autism.



**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

**COMMUNITY
ACTION
SUFFOLK** 
Strengthening the voluntary and community sector

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