



# A GUIDE TO CANTEEN

For health  
professionals  
and schools

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# Acknowledgement of Country

Canteen acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and sovereign Custodians of this land. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We are committed to providing inclusive and appropriate support for First Nations young people, their kin and community impacted by cancer. First Nations peoples are respectfully advised this resource may contain images, names or stories of people who have passed away.

*Ngalaya (Dharawal for ally or friend in battle), is an artwork commissioned by Canteen created by Kamilaroi and Jerrinja woman and artist Jasmine Sarin.*



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**MedAdvisor**

MedAdvisor has partnered with Canteen to relieve people living with cancer from the stress of managing their medication, so that they can focus on spending time with their loved ones and doing the things they enjoy. [mymedadvisor.com](https://mymedadvisor.com)



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## About Canteen

**Canteen is an Australian not-for-profit organisation that provides free and tailored support to young people aged 12-25 who are impacted by cancer. Whether they are dealing with their own diagnosis, a close family member's cancer or the death of a loved one, Canteen provides support such as counselling, peer support events and youth friendly resources.**

We also provide services for parents dealing with cancer in their family, because our research shows that when parents are supported through cancer, their children cope much better as well.

All our support services are underpinned by Canteen's research and evaluation team who conduct world-class psychosocial research with the ultimate goal of transforming the lives of young people affected by cancer.

**Canteen's mission is to be in the corner of every young person when cancer crashes into their world.**



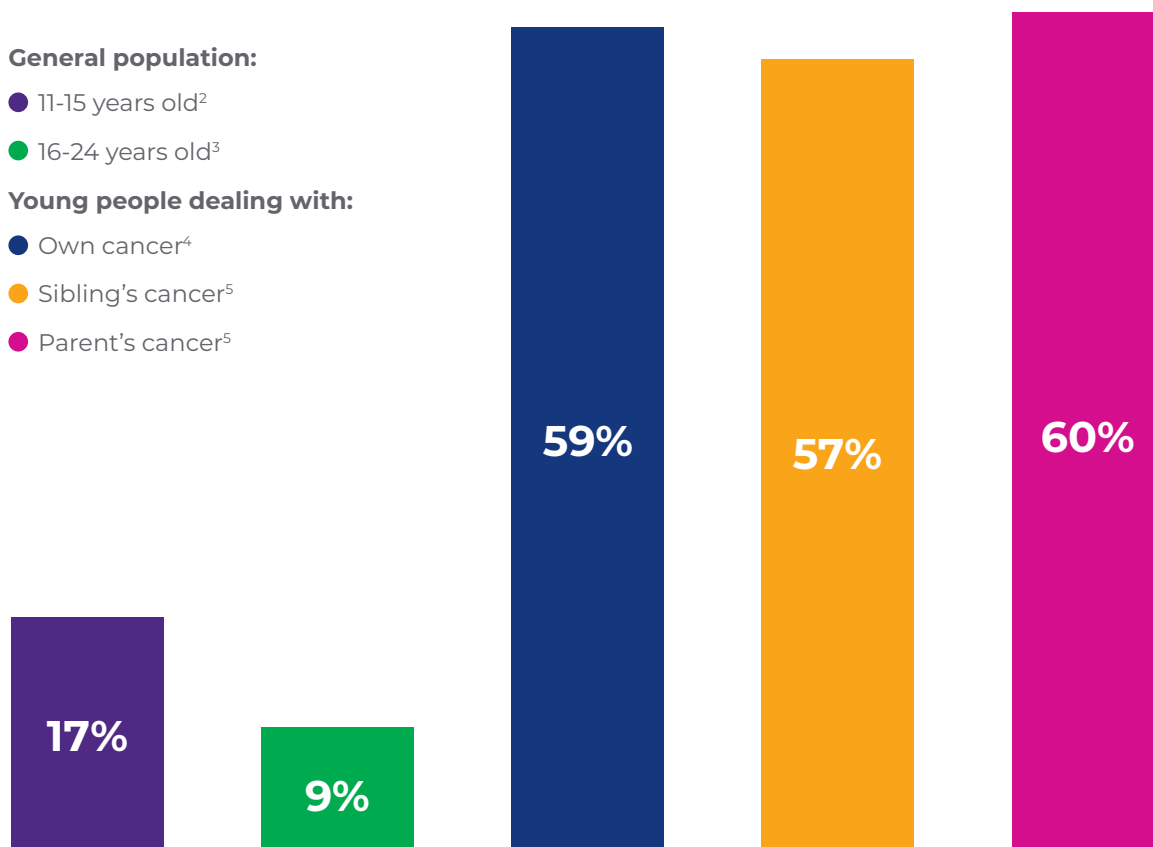
# Impact of cancer on young people

Every year, another **23,000** young people in Australia have to face the challenge of cancer.

- **21,000** find out their parent has cancer
- **1,000** find out their brother or sister has cancer<sup>1</sup>
- **1,000** are diagnosed with cancer themselves

Many young people affected by cancer feel very alone and become disconnected from their peers, which can lead to social isolation and an increased risk of mental health issues. In fact, young people affected by cancer are up to six times more likely to face mental health issues such as depression and anxiety than their peers.

## Percentage of young people experiencing high or very high levels of distress



Without support, high levels of psychological distress can lead to difficulties at school, university or work, along with problematic and unhealthy coping strategies such as drug or alcohol abuse.

In response, Canteen has developed an evidence-based clinical model that aims to assess each young person's needs and goals. We then create an individually tailored support plan with the Canteen services that are best-suited for them.

**After just six months of support from Canteen, almost two thirds of young people affected by cancer report improvements in their mental health and overall wellbeing.**



## References

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018) Cancer in adolescents and young adults in Australia. Cat. no. CAN 110. Canberra: AIHW.
2. Lawrence D, Johnson S, Hafekost J, Boterhoven De Haan K, Sawyer M, Ainley J, Zubrick SR (2015) The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents. Report on the second Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing. Department of Health, Canberra.
3. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2011) Young Australians: their health and wellbeing 2011. Cat. no. PHE 140 Canberra: AIHW.
4. McDonald FEJ, Patterson P (2015) Evaluation of a resource for adolescents and young adults diagnosed with cancer. J Ped Oncol Nurse, doi: 10.1177/1043454214563408.
5. Patterson P, McDonald FEJ, White KJ, Walczak A, Butow PN (2017) Wiley. Psycho-Oncology: Levels of unmet needs and distress amongst adolescents and young adults (AYAs) impacted by familial cancer.





# Our psychosocial model

Adolescence is a critical developmental period, and one in which independence and identity are key factors.

The services we offer aim to provide experiences that promote resilience and emotional wellbeing.

Our research shows that after 6 months of support from Canteen, almost two thirds of young people affected by cancer report improvements in their mental health and overall wellbeing.

The Canteen psychosocial model provides a strong framework of stepped care and effective, evidence-based intervention for all young people.

**The model has five core stages completed with each young person.**

## 1 Psychosocial Assessment

- Each young person participates in an assessment of their wellbeing and cancer-related needs.
- The assessment includes standardised psychological distress and cancer-related unmet needs questionnaires and a semi-structured interview (modified HEADSS assessment).
- Questionnaire results are reviewed with the young person and key needs are identified. Possible support options are discussed and young people contribute ideas and priorities for their individual support plan.

## 2 Triage

- Assessment results and the proposed individual support plan for each young person are presented for psychosocial multidisciplinary team review.
- Each young person is allocated to a psychosocial service stream based on their level of distress, cancer-related need, and required level of support.
- Each young person is allocated a key support worker.

## 3 Service Provision

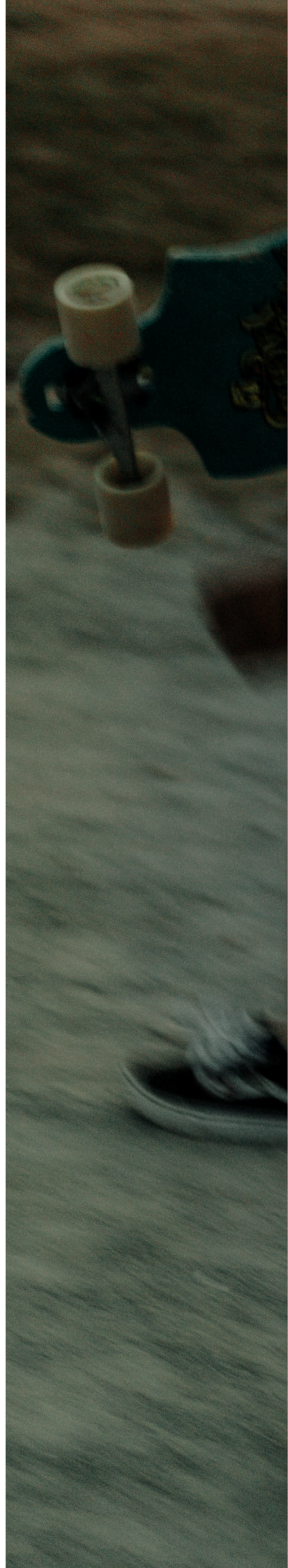
- Young people access Canteen's range of services and programs as per their support plan.

## 4 Psychosocial Review

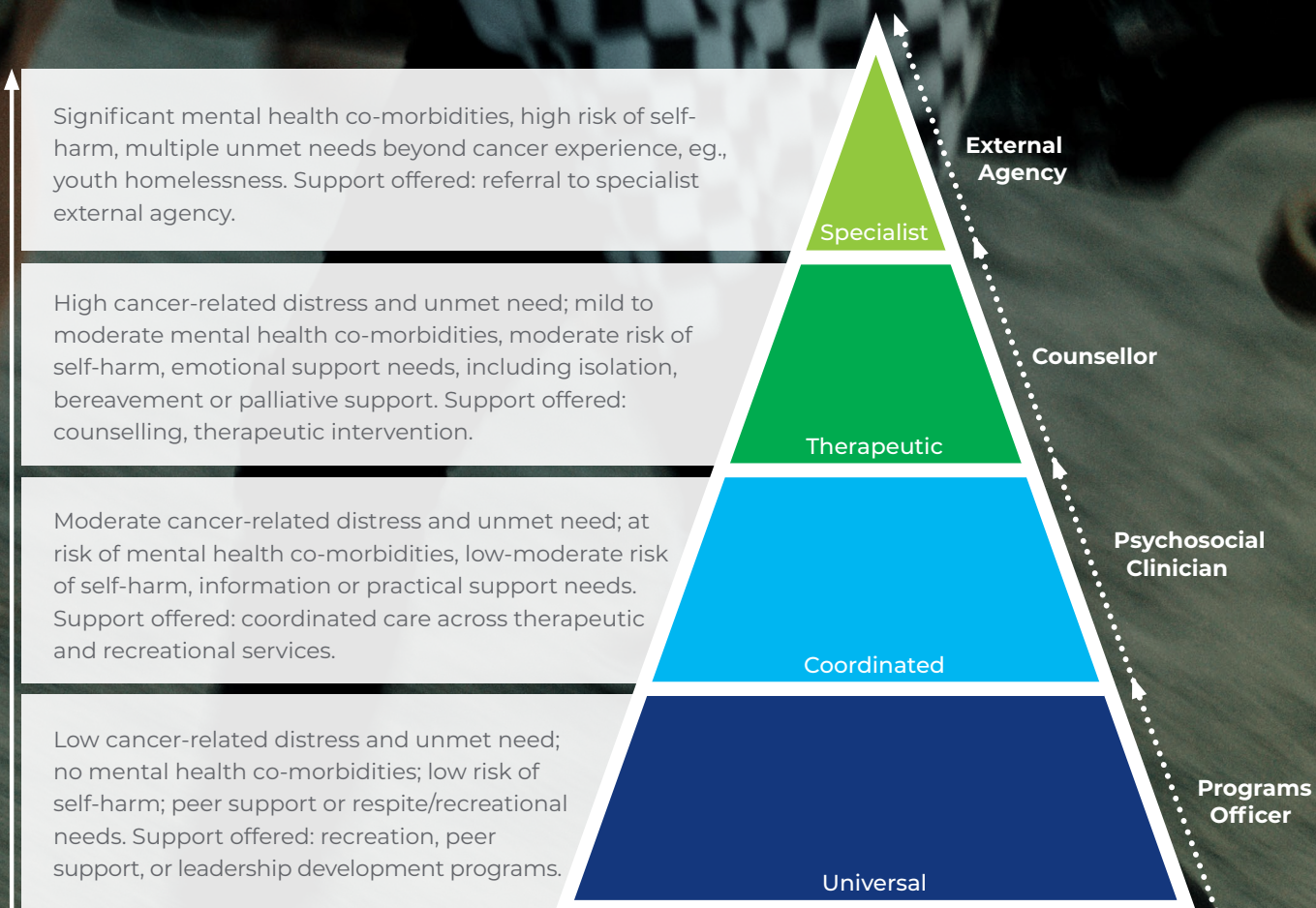
- Support needs are reviewed after an initial six months and then reviewed annually.
- Standardised measures are completed. The key support worker discusses changes in needs and goals with the young person.
- The psychosocial multidisciplinary team reviews the assessment results and service stream. The young person is allocated to a new service stream if needed and their individual support plan is updated.
- The updated plan can recommend ongoing service provision or service closure.

## 5 Service Closure


- Service provision ends if support is no longer required by the young person.











**“When you’re going through a cancer experience in the family, you miss out on so much. It’s hard to focus on things like school and socialising with friends. But thanks to Canteen I’ve been given a safe space and many opportunities to make up for what I’ve missed out on. I can now move forward.”**

**Harry, Canteen youth ambassador**

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# Support for young people

Canteen offers a range of services that are tailored to a young person's unique cancer experience.



## Counselling

Our counsellors are trained to help develop strategies for young people to deal with the impact of cancer. They're available six days a week for phone, email and online counselling.

Face-to-face sessions are also available at most Canteen offices during normal business hours.

[canteen.org.au/counselling](https://canteen.org.au/counselling)



## Online support

Canteen Connect is a secure, online community available 24/7 where young people impacted by cancer can connect with others in a similar situation, check out events around the country or online, and chat to a counsellor.

[canteenconnect.org](https://canteenconnect.org)



## Youth-friendly resources

Canteen provides a wide range of resources to help guide young people through the many challenges cancer brings – from how to talk to friends about cancer to what all the medical jargon means. Visit the website to read, download or order hard copies.

[canteen.org.au/resource](https://canteen.org.au/resource)







## Events and programs

Canteen offers a variety of events and programs tailored to a young person's age and cancer experience. Each of them enables young people to meet others who truly understand what they're going through, develop coping skills and have some much needed fun.

[canteen.org.au/programs](https://canteen.org.au/programs)

### Events

Events include everything from bowling to cooking classes and casual 'drop-ins' at local Canteen offices.

If face-to-face events are difficult to get to, online events such as book clubs, gaming nights and crafting sessions are available on Canteen Connect.

### Programs

We offer online, overnight and weekly group programs which have been specifically designed for young people dealing with:

- having cancer.
- life after cancer treatment.
- their parent having cancer.
- their sibling having cancer.
- grief and loss.



## At school

Canteen's high school based program, When Cancer Comes Along, is a 90-minute interactive presentation that educates Year 9 and 10 school students on:

- what cancer is;
- how they can lower their personal risk of cancer later in life;
- the warning signs and symptoms of cancer;
- the impact of cancer;
- how to help a friend impacted by cancer; and
- the support services available to people impacted by cancer.

After participating in the program, 93% of students reported they learnt more about cancer, and 72% felt more comfortable seeking medical help for possible cancer symptoms.

When Cancer Comes Along also aligns with the national curriculum for health and physical education.

[canteen.org.au/schools](https://canteen.org.au/schools)



## For young people with cancer

Canteen provides a range of specialist services for young people diagnosed with cancer, learn more at [canteen.org.au/youngpatients](https://canteen.org.au/youngpatients)



### Robots Service

Young people diagnosed with cancer often have to spend long periods in hospital undergoing treatment. This means they can miss weeks, sometimes months of school, leading to feelings of isolation and disconnection from their peers and social life. Canteen's innovative robots use video-conferencing technology to enable young people to attend school from their hospital bed or from home, allowing them to stay connected to their school and friends, and maintain daily routines so they can continue feeling a sense of normalcy.



### Youth Cancer Services

Youth Cancer Services are specialist treatment and support services for young people with cancer, designed to meet their unique treatment, care and support needs through a multidisciplinary approach. The YCS receive federal funding through Canteen as well as state and territory government funding. There are five lead Youth Cancer Services, based in major hospitals in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide. These lead services work with over 25 hospitals and health services across Australia.

Around 75% of all newly diagnosed young cancer patients are supported by the Youth Cancer Services. Last year, 1,462 young cancer patients were supported through the YCS.



### Clinical trials

Canteen funds nationally coordinated clinical trials, run by some of Australia's brightest researchers, in cancer types with the highest death rates for adolescents and young adults. This is vital as clinical trials are the fastest way to access cutting-edge cancer treatment and young people are often ineligible due to age restrictions. Clinical trials help researchers learn whether new treatments will work for young cancer patients which will improve survival rates as well as reduce short and long-term side effects.

**“Younger people have significantly poorer survival rates than children or older adults for cancer types that are common in their age group. Clinical trials are a huge step forward for young Australian cancer patients, particularly those diagnosed with rare or deadly types of cancers.”**

**Peter Orchard**, Canteen CEO



### Education and Career Support

Our Education and Career Support Service (ECS) helps young cancer patients aged 15-25 get back to study, work and life. This service helps mitigate the long-term impacts of cancer by supporting young people to reengage with tertiary education or redefine career aspirations while overcoming complex barriers.







**“Just knowing Canteen is around and there is someone there to develop you and hold you in that space, the benefit is hard to explain in words. You feel very lost and helpless, especially when you have to take care of your teenage kids. I had so much support from family and friends, but nothing is comparable to the mental support Canteen has given us.”**

Yoav, father of Teva and Eden

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# Support for parents

**Canteen supports parents because our research has shown us that when parents cope better with cancer and communicate openly, their children are likely to experience less distress and anxiety.**



## Cancer Hub

Cancer in the family brings immense challenges. Finding support shouldn't be one of them. That's why Canteen, Camp Quality and Redkite are working together to deliver Cancer Hub. It's a one stop shop to help families impacted by cancer more easily access the practical and emotional support they need.

[cancerhub.org.au](http://cancerhub.org.au)



## Counselling

Our specialist counsellors can talk with parents impacted by cancer about the parenting challenges that cancer brings. They're available six days a week for phone, email and online counselling. Face-to-face sessions are also available at most Canteen offices during normal business hours.



## Online support

Parenting Through Cancer is an online community from Canteen and Camp Quality, where parents impacted by cancer can connect with each other, find evidence-based resources and chat to a counsellor. The community is for all parents impacted by cancer with children aged 0-25.

[parentingthroughcancer.org.au](http://parentingthroughcancer.org.au)



## Parenting through illness webinars

Our webinar series provides practical tools, strategies, resources and services for parents impacted by a significant illness. Supported by Metriticon.

[canteen.org.au/parentingwebinars](http://canteen.org.au/parentingwebinars)

**To find out more about any of these support services, visit**  
**[canteen.org.au/parents](http://canteen.org.au/parents)**





## Refer to Canteen through Cancer Hub

You can now refer to Canteen through Cancer Hub, a collaboration between Canteen, Camp Quality and Redkite. Cancer Hub is a digital one stop shop where specially trained staff identify every family member's needs and then actively help them access the practical and emotional support they need, regardless of which community-based organisation provides the service.

- 1 Get permission to provide us with details
- 2 Fill in the easy online form at [cancerhub.org.au/refer](https://cancerhub.org.au/refer)
- 3 Cancer Hub staff will get in touch in 1-2 business days

To find out more about Canteen support services, visit [canteen.org.au](https://canteen.org.au) or call 1800 226 833.

