

“IT JUST MADE ME FEEL BETTER”: QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NOVEL VIRTUAL PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR ADOLESCENTS WITH CANCER

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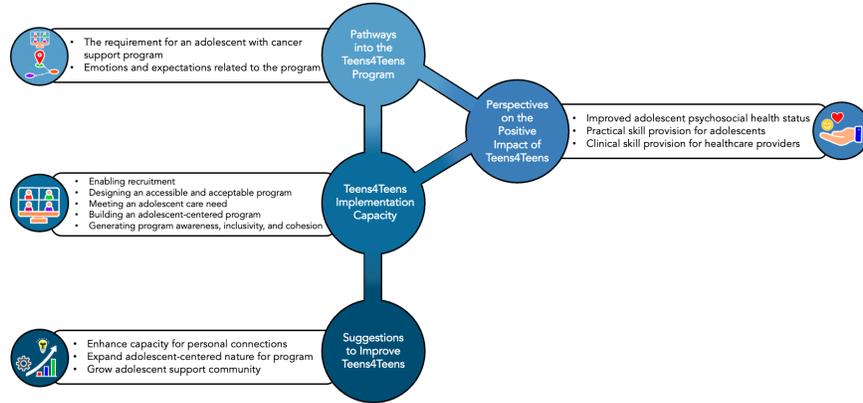
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Abstract

Background: Adolescents with cancer routinely report feelings of isolation and exclusion, including from medical decision-making. To address this problem and support adolescents, we designed and implemented into clinical practice the novel, virtual, weekly Teens4Teens peer support group and patient education program. **Objective:** We examined the views of participating adolescents, program guest speakers, and program moderators as they pertained to the need for the program and its feasibility, acceptability, and perceived impact. **Methods:** We recruited all available adolescents, moderators, and guest speakers who participated in Teens4Teens to take part in audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews. Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis. **Results:** We conducted 21 interviews across participant groups. We identified four broad themes: pathways into the Teen4Teens program, Teens4Teens implementation capacity, perspectives of the positive impact of Teens4Teens and suggestions to improve Teens4Teens. These themes described a perceived need for adolescent-centered psychosocial programming in pediatric cancer care, provided lessons on how best to build and apply such a program in practice, and highlighted the value of the program for both adolescents and clinicians’ acceptability, feasibility, and perceived utility. **Conclusion:** Adolescents, guest speakers, and moderators valued Teens4Teens and made suggestions to retain or improve capacity to routinely implement the program. Adolescent-tailored psychosocial programming such as Teens4Teens is positioned to be integrated into clinical care with relative ease and may serve to improve the cancer care experience of adolescents and their families.

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Table 1.docx available at <https://authorea.com/users/609638/articles/638936--it-just-made-me-feel-better-qualitative-examination-of-the-implementation-of-a-novel-virtual-psychosocial-support-program-for-adolescents-with-cancer>

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