

AMY HEMMINGTON  
HEALTH PSYCHOLOGIST,  
COUNTIES MANUKAU  
HEALTH

# PONZ 2017 CONFERENCE

---

## KALEIDOSCOPE OF CARE

---

### CONFERENCE SUMMARY

---

I attended the Psychosocial Oncology New Zealand (PONZ) 2017 conference in Christchurch from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> November. It was a wonderful opportunity to develop my relationships with members of the wider Cancer Support Initiative as well as members of the Cancer Society team. I attended a number of interesting and informative sessions at the conference and I have taken away several things that I will use in my clinical practice. The conference has also sparked my interest in areas where I would like to do further reading or training.

One of the sessions that stood out the most for me was the sleep workshop provided by Alex Mortlock. He was an engaging and knowledgeable presenter who had a lot to offer on the topic of sleep. I learned more about the theoretical models around sleep including the circadian rhythm and how this relates to body temperature, as well as the sleep pressure model. I also learned more about environmental light levels and the stark contrast between a bright sunny day outdoors (100,000 lux) and artificial light indoors (under 300 lux). This can help to explain some of the difficulties inpatients have with sleep whilst in hospital. Interestingly, all that is needed to keep our circadian rhythm in check is about 30-60mins of daylight a day. This is knowledge that I will be able to use in my clinical work. This workshop was also a reminder to address sleep issues and the use of sleep hygiene in a systematic way. It is important to thoroughly explore sleep issues looking at possible predisposing factors (e.g. overuse of caffeine during the day), precipitating factors (e.g. a cancer diagnosis) and perpetuating factors (e.g. the expectation they won't sleep) that may be contributing to a person's disrupted sleep pattern. To then target sleep hygiene accordingly. It is important to set realistic expectations for patients too: improvement is gradual and will take time, there is no such thing as perfect sleep, and it's normal to wake in the night and have an occasional bad night's sleep. In terms of interventions, Alex spoke about stimulus control and cognitive strategies for addressing worries or challenging unhelpful beliefs about sleep. He also spoke about sleep compression which was a method I had done some research on previously and had not had the confidence to use with my patients. Hearing

Alex explain this intervention has given me more confidence in being able to use it safely in my clinical work.

The other session that was most useful for me was the workshop provided by Linda Carlson on mindfulness-based cancer recovery. Linda provided all workshop participants with the manual for the mindfulness-based cancer recovery group that she facilitates. It is a great resource that I will no doubt refer back to frequently. Linda's workshop also provided alternative ways of framing concepts that were really helpful, as well as new breathing techniques.

The talk on gratitude groups was poignant for me as I had just finished reading Victor Frankl's book Man's Search for Meaning. It has continued my interest in the area of meaning-centered therapy and I hope to attend further training on this. Along similar lines, Deborah Hercock's workshop suggested some further reading in the area of meaning-centered therapy by Balfour Mount which I plan to read.

Finally, the keynote speakers Allister Bush and Wiremu NiaNia provided a really inspiring example of cultural collaboration. They provided case examples of how they have worked together to support patients from both a Maori perspective and a Western perspective. It was also nice to hear that they were not afraid to challenge each other's perceptions or ideas.

---

## SESSIONS ATTENDED

---

### 2<sup>nd</sup> November

Keynote: "Breaking Bad", Amanda Lyver

Papers:

"The voice of the caregiver: Giving volume to the silence", Juliet Ireland

"Presenting the use of gratitude as a specific focus for reflection groups, in a hospice setting, to facilitate well-being and meaning-discovery for caregivers and patients", Nerine Gregersen

Workshop: "Hearing with the heart. Finding peace in the presence of suffering.", Deborah Hercock

Self-care workshop: Flax weaving

### 3<sup>rd</sup> November

Keynote: "Wairua in life and death – how Maori healing perspectives and bicultural collaboration can help us support Maori whanau with the spiritual side of severe and life threatening illness", Allister Bush and Wiremu NiaNia

Workshop: "Treatment for cancer-related sleep disorders and fatigue", Alex Mortlock

Papers:

"Keeping us honest with technology and digital tools", Nicole winters

Keynote: "Mindfulness-based cancer recovery: Rationale, history and research results", Linda Carlson

### 4<sup>th</sup> November

Workshop: 'Mindfulness-based cancer recovery: An experiential workshop', Linda Carlson