Needs Assessment Tool For Planning Your CIS

If you are planning to establish a CIS, this tool will help you conduct a basic assessment of the needs and proposed structure for your service. It can also be used as a checklist to compile data.

> ***If you are applying for membership with ICISG, you can use the information in your completed summary grid at the end of this assessment to help you answer the questions included in the online membership application.***

Using the Assessment Tool to Conduct a Basic Overview Assessment

Assess the client/audience, the environment (i.e., what else exists), and the capacity of the sponsoring organization. You will need to define the geographical area (country, state, county or district) you aim to serve and then ask yourselves the following questions:

What is already available?

- Are there any cancer information or support services already serving this population?
- What do these other services provide?
- What channels do they use to provide their services? (phone, in-person support, online chat or email, etc)
- Do these other services reach all of your target population?
- Are there any "gaps" in provision that they do not cover?
- Is there a benefit in offering an alternative service to those already provided?

These questions should help you get a sense of what services you might want to provide through your CIS.

How will you define your target clients?

- What is the incidence of cancer in your area? How many new cases in your area are diagnosed each year for each type of cancer?
- What are the cultural factors that influence your population's attitudes towards cancer?
- What languages are spoken in your area?
- What are the education levels and income levels like in your population?
- What are literacy rates like in your area? What is the average reading age for adults in your area?
- How much access does your population have to telephones and the internet?

This information can help you begin to decide which cancers to prioritise and what the most effect channels of delivery might be for your population.

What is the scope of your service?

The information gathered in the first two questions will help you begin to describe the services you want to offer and their scope. To help you focus still further, ask yourself the following questions:
- Are you planning to reach all the potential users, or do you want to focus on a subgroup with a specific need? (e.g people with a common cancer in your area, a specific underserved group)
- Which of the following are you going to provide? Information, support counselling, printed/online information materials, or all of these?
- What channels will you use to provide your service? Telephone, in-person support, email, online social media, outreach or all of these?
- What time of day will your service be available? How many days a week?

How will you resource your service?

When you have described what you want to offer you need to look at what you would need to resource it:
- What is demand likely to be for your service? (volume of calls, etc.)
- What type of staff do you need? (medical professionals, nurses, social workers, trained lay advisors, trained volunteers)
- How many of these staff will you need?
- What kind of training will your staff need?
- What information resources will your staff need?
- How will these information resources be updated?
- What kind of equipment will your staff need? (telephones, computers, library resources, etc.)
- What kind of location would your staff need? Can they work from home? Do you need a telephone room? Do you need private counselling rooms?
- What administrative assistance will your staff need?
- What are the costs of all of the needs listed above?
- What sources of funding do you have now?
- Are you likely to have more funding in the future? From what sources?
- What data will you collect from your clients so that you can accurately describe who uses your service? How will you store and protect this data in order to correctly comply with data protection laws? How will you inform your enquirers about the data you collect about them?

How will your service work with other organizations?

- If you are providing the service as part of a larger organization, what are their expectations of your service?
- Are there opportunities to collaborate with other agencies to reduce costs and maintain sustainability?

Summary Grid

You can use the following grid to help you summarize your assessment. ***This grid is included in the online membership form*** and will need to be completed if your organization is applying for ICISG membership.

If your CIS is currently in the planning stages and is not yet operational, your answers should describe what services you plan to provide and who you plan to serve once your CIS actually begins providing services.

We know there is a need for this service because:	
Who uses our service? Who are we trying to serve? (i.e. patients, family, people with specific forms of cancer, etc.)	
Our services include the following: (i.e., information, counseling, support, etc.)	
We offer services in the following languages:	
We offer our services through the following channels: (Phone/face-to-face/online, etc.)	

We offer services on these days and time of the week:	
We use the following types of people to deliver our services: (Health professionals, social workers, trained employees, trained volunteers, etc.)	
Our staff has the following training programme:	
Our staff has the following information resources:	
Our funding comes from:	
We will evaluate and promote our services by:	