



Creating and Managing a Cancer Learning Resource Center

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The Idea of a Cancer Learning Resource Center (LRC)

People being treated for cancer, their families and caregivers seek access to credible, comprehensive, and current oncology health-related information. Creating a cancer learning resource center (LRC) within a health care institution provides patients their families and clinical staff with access to the tools and resources they need. Research supports that informed and knowledgeable patients have better outcomes and greater satisfaction with their care.

These guidelines can be used as a resource for institutions to develop the type of LRC that will best meet the needs of their patients.

There are many different types of LRCs. Some are as simple as a self-serve kiosk, while others are fully staffed and provide a comprehensive array of materials and services for patrons, and others may be fully online and digitally accessible. Many LRCs have educational brochures, community resource information, consumer and medical reference books, DVDs, CDs, electronic libraries or e-libraries, business centers and computers for Internet searches and access to education specialists that can help conduct an in-depth search for information requests.

Planning for the development of a an LRC depends on the needs of the institution, the population being served, available funding, space, and staffing resources.

Developing an LRC

LRC development should include involvement and input from key stakeholders during the entire process from assessment of needs to evaluating the impact.

- **Determine the key stakeholders.**

Stakeholders include patients, families, caregivers, clinical providers, nursing, patient advocates, social workers, health educators, facilities, administration, patient experience, communications. Librarians, patient navigators and others in your institution.

- **Assess the need** for an LRC.

Include input from patients, families, and caregivers. A formal needs assessment could be conducted with patients to gain insight into patient information needs.

- **Plan** the LRC.

- Factors of planning to consider include scope and services, space and location, personnel and staffing, funding and budget, institutional organization, collection development and collection curation.
- Create a multi-disciplinary task force with members from key stakeholder groups.
- Determine where the LRC fits into the institution's organizational structure.
 - What department or service line is funding the LRC?
 - Who is managing the LRC?

- **Implement** the LRC plans.

- **Evaluate** the impact of the LRC on patients and families, patient satisfaction, and the institutional mission.

Assessing the Need for an LRC

A needs assessment for an LRC determines the needs or gaps between the current state of patient information/education and the desired state. The needs assessment helps in the planning, development and refining of an LRC.

Getting input from patients, families, and caregivers in interviews, focus groups, or surveys is important to the creation of an LRC and is a vital part of the needs assessment. The members of a Patient Family Advisory group (if the institution hosts a patient advisory group) are a valuable resource to respond to the needs assessment. Institutional key stakeholder input is valuable too and may be a different set of questions on the needs assessment.

Create the needs assessment to determine the most important needs that patients have for information regarding their diagnosis, disease, and services. Multiple choice and open-ended questions in combination can provide insight into the depth of information and services patients would like to have available. Health literacy levels are important to remember when developing the needs assessment. Once the data are collected, analyze, summarize, and prioritize the data.

There are many resources available on how to develop and conduct a thorough needs assessment. Some resources to start with include:

- The National Institutes of Health [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC64520](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC64520)
- The U.S. Department of Education www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/compneedsassessment.pdf
- The Centers for Disease Control [cdc.gov/healthyschools/tths/trainingcadre/resources/assessment_steps.docx](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/tths/trainingcadre/resources/assessment_steps.docx)

Planning for an LRC

The multi-disciplinary task force can use the information from the needs assessment to develop the plans for an LRC.

During planning, consideration should be given to the scope of services, space and location, environment, personnel and staffing, funding and budget, placement in organization structure and policies and procedures of the LRC. These are addressed below.

Scope of Services

Review the goals of the LRC and clarify the scope of services the LRC will offer and the audience the LRC will serve. This will lead to the planning regarding space, staffing, size of the collection, policies, and procedures. Services that may be a part of the LRC:

- Materials to borrow (a lending library) (languages other than English also)
- Pamphlets and brochures (languages other than English also)
- Cancer-specific, support, and health information
- Face to face education
- Classes and events
- Programs and activities
- Information search, clinical research
- Business services: faxing, scanning, copying, printing, cell phone charging station
- Computer and internet use
- Notary services for health care documents
- Wigs as part of a wig program
- Video viewing
- Relaxation area (may include games, crafts, leisure reading)
- Self service area
- Personal technology support
- Electronic health record support

Space and Location

The scope of services will be a determinant in the amount of space the LRC needs to deliver the services. Working with Facilities to find and create the best space is important. There are no benchmarks for amount of square footage needed for an LRC. It will depend on space available (and space is a hot commodity in many institutions).

As much as possible, advocate for a location that is central to patient flow or is readily accessible to patients. Premium locations would be near front entrances, near registration desks, near the dining area, grouped with other patient services in a central location, near gift shops, near high volume clinics/departments, or in waiting areas.

If the facility has architectural or design staff, ask for their input in creative uses of space and furniture.

Should your institution implement a fully online, digital access LRC, space issues may not be as paramount. There should be office space allotted for staff who will deliver and maintain an online LRC.

Environment

Consider the environment within an LRC and how design can be person centered, welcoming and accessible. Depending on the type of LRC being implemented these should be considered in the planning process.

- Furniture (see Appendix 1: Vendors for Furniture and Supplies)
 - Library shelving (if a lending library)
 - Computer desks and chairs
 - Comfortable armchairs/sofas
 - Tables and side chairs
 - Slatwall for brochures and pamphlets
 - Cabinetry
- Lighting and natural light
- Accessibility
- Display area
- Private consult space
- Classroom space
- Book processing/unpacking workspace
- Copier/Fax/Scanner space
- Storage
- Distractions (e.g., fish tanks, art)

Reference: Laursen J, Danielsen A, Rosenberg J. Effects of environmental design on patient outcome: a systematic review. *HERD*. 2014 Summer;7(4):108-19. doi: 10.1177/193758671400700410. PMID: 25303431.

Personnel and Staffing

The staffing model will be a reflection of the space allotted, hours of operations and type of LRC.

A library LRC will require a different level of staffing than self-serve or information center. A library type of LRC will need staff with skills or training in reviewing and acquiring materials, organizing materials, helping visitors find appropriate materials, updating and maintaining the collection, maintaining circulation information, and skill in information/reference research, and may need bilingual skills depending on the patient population.

Staff may be health education specialists, social workers or nurses to staff the LRC, and if the LRC is a lending library, librarians may be utilized.

Consider a staffing model where health professionals from different disciplines job share or rotate through the LRC to be able to offer a broader spectrum of services. If funding is not available to hire health professionals, recruit and train volunteers to run the LRC. Consider a professional staff supplemented by a volunteer presence. The LRC may be set up as a self-serve area where visitors select publications or access electronic information without staff assistance.

Potential Duties and Responsibilities

- Assessing education needs of patrons
- Providing reference services
- Development of patient education materials
- Developing, teaching and evaluating classes
- Developing and providing community outreach education
- Providing information and referral services
- Referring to institutional services such as social work, patient navigation, patient advocacy and spiritual health
- Referring to community services for support groups or financial assistance (see Appendix 3: Cancer Support Organizations and Resources)
- Applying for grants
- Training and supervising paid staff and volunteers
- Managing LRC budget
- Cataloging LRC materials
- Facilitating support groups / partnering with supportive care
- Purchasing/ordering patient education materials
- Developing patient education materials
- Stocking central patient education stations with material

Funding and Budget

When planning a new LRC, there are two distinct budget considerations: 1) what it will cost to build, fill, and staff initially, and 2) what it will cost to keep it staffed and maintained with up-to-date materials and equipment.

The budget and funding that supports the development and ongoing management of an LRC can come from a variety of venues but most often is from:

- Internal foundation budget support
- Grants from external foundations and organizations
- Hospital support
- Fundraisers, special events, and donations
- Patient gifts and memorial funds

Develop an LRC business plan proposal, which includes concept, mission, operational plans, and budget. Seek the advice of others at your institution that have purchased similar equipment, furniture, and office supplies. Budget planning should include initial start-up costs and annual operation budget.

Items to include in budget planning are:

- Personnel including salary and benefits
- Collection Development—books, e-books, AV material, pamphlets, periodical subscriptions
- Equipment—computers, copiers/fax, telephone, television, projection equipment, headphones
- Computer Software—library management (circulation) system, library catalog system, content management system
- Library Supplies—bookplates, cataloging stickers, book covers, display easels, literature racks
- Furniture—tables, chairs, storage cabinets, bookcases, couches/armchairs. Literature racks/slatwalls, library cart
- Patient Support Items (such as wigs or hats)
- Marketing—Design and print promotional materials, brochures, display boards, signage, promotional materials (this should be planned in collaboration with the institutional marketing/PR department)
- Food—groups, special events
- Amenities—games, puzzles, non-health related materials
- Travel/Continuing Education—Conferences, membership fees for professional organizations, travel expenses

- Overhead, Utilities, Maintenance—lease, housekeeping, IT support (these may be at the departmental or division level and may not be a direct expense depending on your institution). Request an email address specific to the LRC.

Some creative ideas for obtaining funding are:

- Obtain a one-time grant to allow for construction of a LRC and purchasing of books, DVDs, materials, supplies, computers, software, photocopier, furniture, signage, decor etc.
- If you have a Development Office or Foundation within your institution, ask key members to be part of your planning committee. These individuals can be extremely helpful when searching for funding. They can identify organizations, people, and grants that may be potential sources for funding.
- Seek funding supported by local services or businesses in the area.
- Collaborate with local support groups/advocacy groups for fundraising. You may be able to identify these groups through your community outreach department and/or your development department.
- If your center is strictly funded by grants and donations, let this be known. People are more likely to donate in this instance. Large donors may also seek naming opportunities for your center.
- Create a list of books, materials, and equipment you would like to have in your LRC and have it available for visitors who wish to donate items.
 - Promote wish list to employees. During the winter holidays, ask hospital staff/medical staff to substitute a gift exchange with a donation to the LRC.
 - Recognize donors in various ways such as: send a thank you card, place a bookplate in the item recognizing their gift, create a list of donors or donated materials and publish it in institutional social media.
- Seek education or research grants.
- Raise money through philanthropy. Have an art auction or comedy club/dinner with proceeds benefiting the LRC.
- Have patron envelopes or a donation jar available in the LRC.

Implementing LRC Plans

Your business plan has been approved and now it is time to implement the plans that all the stakeholders contributed to its development.

Policies and Procedures

A written Policies and Procedures Manual for your LRC provides the framework for delivery of services and operations and is a guide for staff. Care should be taken that policies and procedures not only document LRC functions but are also in compliance with institutional policies and procedures.

The Policies and Procedures Manual should be formally reviewed and updated annually or on the rotation which your institution employs for policies and should be updated as operations change.

Below are policy and procedure categories other LRC's use for their operations. The categories are divided into topics.

Overview

Mission and vision statements

- Mission and vision statements are essential to the development and success of a Learning Resource Center. The mission and vision succinctly communicate to others why the LRC exists, what it does, who it serves and its potential. A clearly stated mission and vision continue to be important when seeking financial support or evaluating the LRC's effectiveness.
- The vision statement is what the LRC hopes to accomplish or become. The vision statement is a means of reaching to the future and keeps everyone focused on the ultimate goal. It should be realistic, responsive to change and serve as a guide to action. In short, a vision should motivate and inspire the group to achieve its mission.

Reference: 3 Statements That Can Change the World: Mission/Vision/Values (*Creating the Future formerly The Community Driven Institute*): help4nonprofits.com/NP_Bd_MissionVisionValues_Art.htm

Location, hours of operation, contact information

- Location: include the full mailing address.
- Directions for reaching the LRC from all main entry points in the institution.
- Hours of operation should include specific days, hours, and type of services available.
- LRC contact information for patrons should include phone number and if applicable, fax number and website and email addresses.
- Numbers for police and security and instructions on reporting a fire, medical or other emergency.

- Provide contact numbers for institutional support: information services and computer support, phone and equipment support, volunteer services, communication services, environmental services, facility operations and maintenance, security, and numbers to report fire, medical or other emergencies.

Staffing Model

- Patrons to be served
- Scope of services

General Policies and Procedures

These policies may be institutional and may not need a specific LRC policy.

- Staff and volunteer orientation and training programs
- Staff and volunteer coverage of the LRC
- Confidentiality and personal health information
- Communication support services
- Infection control
- Emergency preparedness
- Security
- Equipment failure and business continuity
- Environmental cleanup
- Gifts and donations
- Collection recommendations or requests
- Display guidelines
- Materials and liability disclaimer
- Customer Service

Resource Center Operations and Maintenance

- Opening and closing of the center—tasks and processes to open and close
- Daily and weekly LRC maintenance
 - Sanitize the computer screen, keyboard, mouse and other equipment patrons may touch (unless you have a facilities department who does this).
 - Check drop box for returned items.
 - Check in returned items using designated process and software.
 - Shelve returned items.

- Shelf reading for items out of order.
- Remove programs downloaded or documents saved by patrons on public computers.
- Tracking of patron visits and use of services
 - The number of individuals who enter the LRC and the services they utilize.
 - A system of tracking (free database service, included in library circulation system, spreadsheet or Microsoft Forms) is part of daily LRC duties.
 - The type of request, outcome of interventions and time spent facilitating the request.
- Fax and telephone service
 - Availability of fax and telephone services.
 - Patron cost, if any, for using these services.
- Ordering supplies
 - Supplies for the LRC can include book labels, book repair materials, notepads, printer paper and ink, copier toner, etc.
 - These supplies may need to be ordered from one or more vendors.
 - Supply list with vendors used, product numbers, cost, quantity needed and frequency to order can be conveniently used to keep supplies at par level.
 - Purchasing supplies should be in concordance with your institution's Material Management and Purchasing Department policies.
- Book care and handling
 - Regular cleaning and dusting of the shelves.
 - Covering book jackets with a clear plastic covering can help to protect the book and jacket from wear.
 - Processing of books—unpacking orders, covering, classifying, shelving.
- Sales of merchandise
 - Your LRC may sell materials, in addition to offering loaning privileges. Materials can include gift items, journals, book-related items such as bookmarks or reading lights, CDs, etc.
 - Issues to consider include: the process for ordering materials and tracking inventory, using a cash register, types of payment that are accepted, processing money and deposits, the organization's tax-exempt status.
 - Cash management in concordance with your institutional Finance Department.

- Periodic managerial duties
 - Generate usage data for reporting and planning purposes.
 - Review usage data, suggestions, etc. to determine collection replacement and expansion.
 - Collaborate and coordinate with individuals, organizations, and departments who are integral to the success and support of the LRC. This can be accomplished by mailings, meetings, special invitations, etc.

Circulation Services

- Library Management System procedures
- Lending privileges and patron registration
- Loan periods
- Number of items allowed to check out at a time
- Reserves or holds
- Overdue fines and lost materials
- Procedure for using the classification/cataloging system
- Procedure for processing new items
- Procedure for the circulation system
- Tracking circulation
- Inventory
 - Physical inventory of collection and reconciliation of lost items
 - Frequency
- If allowing patrons to check out items--lending privileges and loan period
- Items which may not be checked out (such as reference materials)
- Patron registration
- Self-serve procedures
- E-Library
 - Process for patron registration and access
 - Loan period
- Method for patrons to return items they borrowed (in person drop off, mailing back)
- How to catalog items and/or use the classification system
- Tracking circulation (use of library management system or manually)

Computer Services and Access

- Who may use
- What programs may be used
- Purpose of use
- Internet access and content
- Posted notice for patrons and internet disclaimer (in conjunction with IT department and Legal)
- Accessibility

Photocopying Guidelines

- Who may use
- Copy limits if restricted
- Charge or free use
- Color copies vs. black and white
- Availability
- Copyright restrictions and posted notice

Collection Development and Maintenance

- Purpose and goal of building the collection
- Selection responsibility
- Criteria for selection of materials
 - Medical accuracy
 - Educational suitability
 - Credibility
 - Health literacy
 - Agreement with your institution standard of care
 - Currency of information
 - Sponsorship/authorship
 - Usefulness for patients and caregivers
 - Quality
 - Languages other than English
- Different media in collection (books, e-books, CD's, DVD's, pamphlets, brochures)
- Material review and evaluation process

- Weeding the collection—frequency, currency
- Challenged material and steps to keep or remove
- Purchasing materials for the collection
- Budget
- Vendors for books, AV and pamphlets (See Appendix 2: Pamphlets and Brochures)
- Reviews from other respected organizations such as reviews from Library Journal, Kirkus Reviews and *Doody's*

Below are topics to consider for your collection, as they relate to cancer care:

Adolescent and young adults	Diet and nutrition	Insurance issues
Art/music/writing therapy	Drug (medication) guides	Intimacy and sexuality
Cancer biographies/ personal stories	Environmental risk	Mind-body relaxation
Cancer fiction	Fertility and cancer	Palliative care
Cancer prevention and early detection	Fitness and exercise	Psychological issues around cancer diagnosis
Caregiving	General and specific cancers	Survivorship for adults
Clinical trials	General health and wellness	Survivorship for adolescent and young adults
Communicating with health care team	Genetics and genetic testing	Symptom management
Communicating within families	Grief and end-of-life care	Tobacco cessation
Complementary and alternative medicine	Herbs and natural supplements	Treatment and side effects
Dictionaries and atlases	Inspiration and spiritual	Talking to children/teens when a family member has cancer

LRC Review Committee

Consider if your institution supports the role of an LRC Review Committee. The purpose of the LRC Review Committee is to oversee the development and review of materials to ensure their accuracy and integrity. These materials may come from a variety of sources including cancer-related organizations or developed internally. The materials may be written, digital, audio or visual.

The decision to review resources contained in and distributed from the LRC will vary with each organization. Materials obtained from the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the American Cancer Society (ACS) and other cancer related organizations may not need to be reviewed since they meet the standard for patient education guidelines. Booklets, pamphlets and fact sheets developed by other organizations or staff members can be reviewed by the committee.

Consider an institution wide patient education policy that upholds this concept.

When the LRC is staffed by a medical librarian, the librarian can review the books and audiovisuals for inclusion in the collection based on the criteria established for collection development. An LRC with non-librarian staff may decide to have materials reviewed by the committee for content accuracy and health literacy. Committee members may include physicians, nurses, social workers, dietitians, and patient advisers.

When developing guidelines for reviewing patient education materials, consider using the book, "Teaching Patients with Low Literacy Skills" 2nd Edition by Cecilia C. Doak et al. To assess the suitability of materials, the book lists the following items that should be reviewed:

- **Content.** Are the knowledge and skills being taught aimed at the reader's behavior? Is the scope of the material limited to the essential information relating to the purpose of the document?
- **Literacy demand.** Is the reading level at an appropriate grade level or lower for low literacy readers? Are common words used in a conversational style and active voice?
- **Graphics.** Are the graphics simple and do they clearly portray the material's purpose?
- **Layout and typography.** What is the type size and font, type of paper and line length? How are the illustrations positioned on the page and are they labeled? Is there white space?
- **Learning stimulation and motivation.** Does the material being reviewed encourage interaction? Are the learners able to do the tasks or behaviors?
- **Cultural appropriateness.** Does the material appear to be culturally similar to the target audience and is it presented in a positive way?

When thinking about health literacy, it is important to consider both personal health literacy and organizational health literacy. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) definitions for Healthy People 2030 address both:

- **Personal health literacy** is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.
- **Organizational health literacy** is the degree to which organizations equitably enable individuals to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.

To learn more about health literacy, visit the National Institutes of Health page:

[nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/health-literacy](https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/health-literacy)

Reference: Clear Communication, Health Literacy. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, National Institutes of Health.

Classification System

The way your collection is classified and managed greatly affects your patron's ability to access and make use of your available resources. Selecting a classification scheme that is appropriate to your needs will help to get you started.

There are several classification systems available for use in an LRC. This numbering/lettering scheme should help patrons to easily locate the information in the collection. The following are a few examples:

- National Library of Medicine (NLM) - used by academic medical libraries. Reflects subject headings in medical terminology, edits and additions to these headings are rigidly controlled by a governing body. Accessible at: classification.nlm.nih.gov
- Library of Congress (LC) - used by academic libraries with multidisciplinary collections. Subject headings are quite broad but use an advanced, non-medical language. Edits and additions to this scheme are equally controlled. Accessible at: loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/lccolas
- Dewey Decimal System - used by schools and public libraries with broad subject collection. Number based system that can become out of control if the collection becomes too focused in one area. Accessible at: oclc.org/en/dewey.html

Some libraries use a combination of the above or develop their own classification system (depending on the size of the collection). The classification system may be a part of your library management system. There are vendors that can supply the bibliographic record to LRCs using NLM, LC or Dewey. The bibliographic record will include the book title, author and publisher information, physical description of the item, subject headings and the classification number. Examples of vendors include:

- BookWhere: webclarity.info/products/bookwhere
- MARCIVE: home.marcive.com

Library Management Systems

There are many library management systems on the market that will help an organization manage the LRC within any budget and desired features. These systems can facilitate budgeting, tracking of orders, performing cataloging functions and tracking patron statistics. These are factors to consider when selecting a library management system:

- Software
 - Purchased and housed on LRC server (or institutional server)
 - Accessed from vendor's server or cloud-based
 - Include your Information Technology department in the purchase and decision as there may be specific cybersecurity issues
 - Include your legal / contracts department to review the contract / agreement
 - Maintenance and upgrades
 - Tech support from vendor
 - If your institution has an academic or medical library, explore the option of utilizing and linking to their library management system
- Features to consider:
 - Cataloging function
 - Serials function
 - Patron record keeping
 - Check in/out capability
 - Ability to generate overdue notices
 - Searchable Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC). The OPAC will be used by the patrons to view the LRC's collection.
 - User View of OPAC—Only in LRC; Access from any computer or via Internet.
 - Integration with eLibrary vendors or common library apps.

Some examples of library management systems include:

- Auto Librarian: store.scanbarcode.com/collections/cloud-based-library-automation-software
- Ex Libris Group: exlibrisgroup.com
- Follett: follettlearning.com
- Library World: libraryworld.com
- ResourceMate: resourcemate.com
- Softlink: softlinkint.com
- Databases such as Excel or Access

Content Management Systems

Content Management Systems are computer programs that allow publishing and editing of content and are useful tools for patrons to access information electronically and while in a location that is not at the institution. This is a helpful resource for knowledge on library content management systems:

- Librarian's Toolbox: librarytoolbox.wordpress.com

If your institution has an academic or medical library, explore the option of utilizing and linking to their library content management system. Include your Information Technology department in assessing and purchasing library content management to prevent cybersecurity issues.

Examples of library content management systems:

- Springshare springshare.com/index.html (LibGuides and other products)
- Joomla joomla.org

Promotion and Marketing

Promoting and marketing your LRC is vital to its success. When and how you promote and market your center depends on a wide variety of factors.

Before embarking on any marketing or promotion, include your institutional Department of Marketing, Public Affairs and/or Communications (it may be one department or may be several) in planning and executing.

Do not plan marketing or promotions without this consultation and collaboration in order to be in compliance with institutional policies.

Leading Patrons to Your Center

- Eye-catching and well-located signage
- Phone number that is easy to remember (you may not have a choice if phone numbers are assigned at the institutional level)
- Creating a welcoming atmosphere can bring people into your center
- Visual educational displays
- Make your center a hub of activity and hosting events
 - Health fairs and programs on timely topics –One- time events or
 - Book signings
 - Complementary therapy sessions (e.g., oncology massage)
 - Educational classes (e.g., chemo, clinical trials, nutrition, radiation)
 - Guest speakers from faculty and staff

- Topical programming
- Awareness month activities
- Coping and Stress Relief sessions (e.g., meditation, mindfulness)
- Meet the Expert programs
- Open houses
- Partnered events (e.g., American Cancer Society's Look Good, Feel Better program)
- Support groups

Creative Strategies to Develop and Maintain Visibility to Patients and Staff

- Partner with your marketing or communications department to provide giveaways such as pens, pads, magnets, jar grippers, bookmarks, water bottles, Frisbees, bags, and other low-cost items which promote your services. Be sure to include your LRC's name, location, phone number, website, email address and hours of business as space is available.
- Consider sending quarterly mailings or emails to community groups (i.e., schools, libraries, churches, parish nurses, health clubs, hotels, restaurants, etc.) about your center's activities (ensure sending communications directly from the LRC is within your institutional communications policy).
- Link your efforts to community organized events such as a cancer awareness walk/run, Race for the Cure, Relay for Life, etc. and sponsor as budget and Marketing Department allow.
- Prescription for learning: The clinician gives the "prescription" – a notepad page with your RC's name and location, and the preprinted statement "Please provide me with more information on ..." followed by a fill-in blank. This may encourage the patient or family members to seek out the services in your center. Some hospitals have their staff send these requests to the LRC. The LRC staff members then mail or email information on the topic of interest directly to the patient.
- Maximize your use of technology to get the message out.
 - Online newsletters and e- mail messages promoting services, classes, support groups, and other LRC activities.
 - Use electronic message boards within your institution and your internal intranet to advertise services.
 - Social media outlets another opportunity to spread the word about your programs. WARNING: do not set up your own social media accounts without consultation with your institutional marketing, public affairs and/or communication departments or you may have to shut them down if they are not sanctioned.
- Use public television and radio stations (only if sanctioned by institution) or your own closed-circuit television (CCTV) network to advertise your LRC's programs and learning options.

- Make announcements over your institution's PA system to advertise that day's programming (this may not be an option as hospitals are making efforts to reduce noise for patients)
- Explore the option of communication of events on patient appointment schedules or electronic health record.
- Use posters, brochures, bookmarks, monthly calendars of events and table tents to attract patients, family, and the community to your LRC.
 - These materials can be placed in patient packets or posted in key hallways, hospitality areas, waiting rooms, in exam and treatment rooms, on bulletin boards and racks, or even in bathrooms, in elevators and on inter-campus shuttle buses.

Social Media

- Social media platforms may help with promoting and marketing an LRC.
- Facebook, Twitter/X, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube, Google+ and other sites
- It is imperative to work closely with any public affairs or social media specialist at your center. Many institutions have established guidelines for messaging through social media as well and a public affairs specialist can help ensure your contributions are consistent with the values of your institution and are approved.

Sustaining the effort and maintaining visibility

While leading people to your center is critical, sustaining the effort is equally as important. No matter the size or location of your LRC, the information needs to be up-to-date and well-stocked, and the atmosphere needs to remain warm and inviting. Friendly, compassionate, and informed staff can be a definite draw for patrons, and staff need to be able to access information quickly or direct people toward the right resources. The LRC also needs to have consistent and reliable hours of services.

Your interface with clinicians and others in and beyond your organization creates an infrastructure that encourages essential buy-in. One way to do this is to involve patients, families, and community members in volunteer efforts or an advisory council. You can also engage a variety of professional disciplines (nursing, social work, pharmacy, nutrition services, etc.) by inviting them to make decisions about materials, help teach programs, and speak at events. Consider marketing your LRC services to health care professionals in your institution through presentations at interdisciplinary meetings and staff meetings and maintaining an Intranet (internal website) for your LRC.

Always be on the lookout for places to promote your LRC and its services. Departmental or clinical area meetings, staff meetings, special events, and conferences are all excellent opportunities to share. Consider developing a slide deck about the LRC that can be used anywhere. You may want to have a staff version and a patient version.

Hosting an open house or providing LRC tours to patients and staff alike allows you to introduce or acquaint people to the LRC, making them more aware of available learning resources. Offering your space for media interviews or as a stop for patient or public tours can add additional exposure for your center.

Work with your Human Resources Department to be included as a topic in new employee onboarding as well as with the academic departments to present to new faculty, fellows, residents or students.

Promoting and marketing LRC services is an ongoing process. It takes thoughtful planning and meticulous follow-up. There is no one right or wrong approach. While a particular strategy may work well for one LRC, the same approach may not work for another LRC. Most importantly, you must know your target audience and select strategies which are tailored to best meet their needs within the structure/culture of your institution.

Evaluating the LRC

Evaluating the LRC is important to show stakeholders that it is effective in meeting patient needs and to provide a foundation to improve services.

Consider collecting data daily and compiling on a monthly and annual (calendar year or fiscal year) basis. Excel spreadsheets (or other data display and analysis tools) are a useful tool for data collection and analysis. Your library management system and content management system may produce reports to include in your data collection.

Consider creating an annual report to be circulated to the stakeholders.

Data and Metrics to Collect, Analyze and Use for Improvement

Patrons

- Number of patrons who visit the LRC
- Number of new registered patrons
- LRC Services patrons use (copy/fax/scan, computer, etc.)
- Themes of information requests
- Time spent with each patron
- Complexity of research to meet patient needs
- Number of information research items delivered
- Type of cancer or clinical cancer center
- Satisfaction with services and staff
- Number of phone calls
- Number of emails
- Number of website views

Collection

- Total volume
- Books, E-books, AV and reference browsed and circulated
- Volume of classification categories (example: classification for breast cancer and how many items)
- Pamphlets and brochures distributed (and in which languages if applicable)
- Items weeded
- Inventory reconciliation
- New items added to the collection

Events, programs and classes

- Attendance
- Number of events
- Evaluation of events by participants (surveys, questionnaires)
- Staff focused vs. patient focused

Marketing and promotion

- Give-away items distributed
- Outreach efforts and number of persons reached
- Number of website views and click rates

Sales and merchandise (if your LRC sells items)

- Total volume of sales
- Total revenue collected
- Volume of items sold

Budget

- Expenses
- Expenses compared to budget

Anecdotal patron information

- Kudos, Comments, Suggestions

Lessons Learned and Helpful Hints

Members from CPEN shared the lessons they learned from the process of developing and managing an LRC. They offer helpful hints and advice for creating, establishing, and managing a cancer LRC and things they wish they had known prior to the development of their own cancer LRC.

Staff and volunteers

- Your staff, whether paid or volunteer, is the public face of your LRC. Choose individuals with great interpersonal communication skills who are motivated to provide excellent customer service.
- Interview and screen all students and volunteers. Provide ongoing guidance, supervision, support and periodic competency testing.
- Volunteers have a variety of background education, computer, and communication skills. Draw on their individual strengths to help support your work environment. Retired volunteers may be more likely to take extended periods of time off to travel, visit family, or care for family. It's helpful to have a list of back-up volunteers to accommodate these times.
- Don't underestimate the number of staff/volunteers you may need.
- Depending on the services provided by your LRC, health educators may be a lot less expensive to hire as staff than nurses, librarians or social workers—although they are not able to perform some of the services those other health professionals can offer.
- Consider hiring a professional librarian (i.e., MLIS).

Operations

- Put together your policies and procedures as best you can before you open.
- When planning, allow for space to display brochures and pamphlets which are preferred to books by many patrons.
- Visitors like having a person to speak with and to gather information relevant to their situation.
- Keep the environment open, warm, and inviting for your LRC.
- Printer, copier, fax and telephone are a must. Offering patients the opportunity to use these services free of charge is a patient satisfier.
- To increase funds for purchasing books: talk with local pharmaceutical representatives about obtaining an unrestricted educational grant to buy books on the disease sites/symptom management issues in which their company is involved (Many hospitals do not allow pharmaceutical representatives to promote in the hospital. Ensure you are compliant with institutional policy).
- Ask medical directors of clinics or disease specific centers to recommend the best textbook in the field for your reference section- then ask them to help you buy it.

Resources

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Health Misinformation Resources

nnlm.gov/guides/health-misinformation-resources

Foreign Language and Diversity Resources

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: nnlm.gov/guides/diversity-equity-and-inclusion
- Foreign Language Health Education Materials: healthinfotranslations.com
- American Cancer Society has Spanish and Asian (Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese) language materials: cancer.org
- Intercultural Cancer Council: iccnetwork.org

Resources for Older Adults

- Medline Plus: nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/seniorshealth.html
- American Geriatrics Society: americangeriatrics.org

Health Literacy Resources

- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) - Health Literacy Toolkit: psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/health-literacy-toolkit
- National Library of Medicine- An Introduction to Health Literacy: nlm.gov/guides/intro-health-literacy
- Siegel, E. R., & Logan, R. A. (Eds.). (2017). *Health literacy: new directions in research, theory and practice*. IOS Press
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, National Institutes of Health - Clear Communication and Health Literacy: nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/health-literacy. *Healthy People 2030*

Resources for Children and Young Adults

- St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital – Cure4Kids: cure4kids.org
- NCI – Childhood Cancers: cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/childhoodcancers
- American Childhood Cancer Organization: candlelighters.org
- Children’s Oncology Group: www.childrensoncologygroup.org
- CureSearch/National Childhood Cancer Foundation: curesearch.org
- Group Loop – Online Support for Teens with Cancer: grouploop.org
- I’m Too Young for This: i2y.com
- Starlight Children’s Foundation: starlight.org

Program Evaluation

- Carolina Population Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. MEASURE Evaluation. Available at: cpc.unc.edu/measure.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A Framework for Program Evaluation. cdc.gov/eval/framework.
- Langbein, L. I. (2015). *Public program evaluation: a statistical guide* (2nd ed.). Routledge. doi.org/10.4324/9781315701363
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Volunteer Staffing

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Web Sites

- American Cancer Society: [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)
- Cancer Patient Education Network (CPEN): [cancerpatienteducation.org](https://www.cancerpatienteducation.org)
- Medical Library Association [mlanet.org](https://www.mlanet.org)
- MedlinePlus Health Information: nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus
- National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) – Consumer Health: An Online Manual: [nlm.nih.gov/guides/consumer-health](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/guides/consumer-health)
- NCCIH (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health): [nccih.nih.gov](https://www.nccih.nih.gov)
- National Cancer Institute: [cancer.gov](https://www.cancer.gov)
- National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN): [nccn.org](https://www.nccn.org)
- National Commission for Health Education Credentialing: [nchec.org](https://www.nchec.org)
- Planetree: [planetree.org](https://www.planetree.org)

Appendix 1: Vendors for Furniture and Supplies

Vendors for LRC Supplies

The following vendors specialize in products and furniture geared to libraries and stores where display and organization for self-service is essential. It is important to compare prices and products between vendors before making a final decision on equipment purchases for your LRC.

When considering new equipment, check with your institution to make sure that your product choices are in line with their design regulations and specifications. If your institution has an Architecture and Design department, consult them as they may have different resources. This list does not represent endorsements for any specific products and is meant to be a guide for LRC planning.

Vendor	Website	Products
Brodart	shopbrodart.com	Library equipment, furniture and supplies
DEMCO	demco.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book processing products • Plastic holders • Slat wall products • Miscellaneous library items
Displays2Go	displays2go.com	Display products
Future Plastics* <i>*Canadian company</i>	futureplastics.ca	Custom acrylic displays
Gaylord	gaylord.com	Library equipment, furniture and supplies
Hubert	http://hubert.com	Slat Wall panels and units, pamphlet holders
The Library Store	thelibrarystore.com	Library equipment, furniture and supplies
MF Blouin	mfblouin.com	Display products
Multiplex Division – The Miller Group	multiplexdisplays.com	Countertop Display units
Vernon Library Supplies	vernonlibrarysupplies.com	Library equipment, furniture and supplies

Appendix 2: Vendors for Pamphlets and Brochures

Vendor	Website
AAMDS (Aplastic Anemia & MDS International Foundation)	aamds.org/forms/request-educational-materials
American Cancer Society	cancer.org/materials
American Institute for Cancer Research	aicr.org
American Diabetes Association	diabetes.org
American Brain Tumor Association	abta.org/shop
Be The Match	bethematchclinical.org/medical-education-and-research/materials-catalog
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network	bcan.org/download-bcans-patient-handbook-bladder-cancer-basics
Bloch Cancer Foundation	https://blochcancer.org/books/guide-for-cancer-supporters
breastcancer.org	breastcancer.org
Canadian Cancer Society	cancer.ca/en
Cancer Support Community	orders.cancersupportcommunity.org
CancerCare	cancercare.org/publications/order
CareNotes	carenotes.com
Children's Tree House Foundation	childrenstreehousefdn.org/resources/our-books
CLRC Patient Legal Handbook	thedrlc.org/cancer/publications-webinars/patient-legal-handbook
Cutaneous Lymphoma Foundation	clfoundation.org/publication-ordering
Free to Breathe (Lung Cancer Research Foundation)	lungcancerresearchfoundation.org/for-patients/free-educational-materials
International Myeloma Foundation	international-myeloma-foundation.myshopify.com/collections/publications
International Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia	iwmf.com
LiveStrong Foundation	livestrong.org

Vendor	Website
Krames	kramesstore.com
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society	lls.org/resource-center/download-or-order-free-publications
Living Beyond Breast Cancer	nationsprint.com/clients/lbbc/start_new_order.cgi?#
Lymphoma Research Foundation	lymphoma.org
Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation	themmrf.org/educational-resources
National Cancer Institute materials (Heeter Healthy Publications-CPEN)	cancerpatienteducation.org/CPEN/ProfessionalResources/BulkPrintingProgram.aspx
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship	canceradvocacy.org/shop
National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases	catalog.niams.nih.gov
National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research	catalog.nidcr.nih.gov
National Institute of Mental Health	nimh.nih.gov/health/publications
National Institute on Aging	order.nia.nih.gov
Nebraska Medicine	nebraskamed.com/child-life-services/resources
Neuroendocrine Tumor Research Foundation	netrf.org/domestic-order-form
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network	pancan.org/for-healthcare-professionals
Patient Resource	patientresource.com
Susan G. Komen	komen.org/support-resources/tools/komen-education-materials
Thyca	thyca.org/medical-professionals/#free-materials

Appendix 3: Cancer Support Organizations and Resources

Organization	Website
American Cancer Society	cancer.org/support-programs-and-services.html
American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR)	aicr.org
Bone Marrow & Cancer Foundation: CancerBuddy	bonemarrow.org/support-and-financial-aid/support/cancerbuddy
Cancer + Careers	cancerandcareers.org/en
CancerCare	cancercares.org
Cancer Financial Assistance Coalition	cancerfac.org
Cancer Legal Resource Center (CLRC)	thedrlc.org/cancer
Dear Jack Foundation	dearjackfoundation.org
Elephants and Tea	elephantsandtea.org
FORCE	facingourrisk.org
4 th Angel	4thangel.ccf.org
Joe's House	joeshouse.org
Imerman Angels	imermanangels.org
Lazarex Cancer Foundation	lazarex.org
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS)	lls.org/support-resources
Mindful	mindful.org
National Cancer Institute (NCI)	cancer.gov/about-cancer/coping
National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health	nccih.nih.gov/health
National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN)	nccn.org/patientresources/patient-resources
Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF)	patientadvocate.org
Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF)	pcf.org
SHARE Cancer Support	sharecancersupport.org
Stupid Cancer	stupidcancer.org
Triage Cancer	triagecancer.org

Cancer Patient Education Network (CPEN)

CPEN was initiated in 1989 by the National Cancer Institute as a structure for strengthening cancer education in cooperation with patient educators at National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated Comprehensive and Clinical Cancer Centers in the United States.

CPEN represents cancer education leadership from cancer centers and programs across America and Canada with a similar mission to promote excellence in patient, family and community education across the continuum of cancer care.

Creating and Managing a Cancer Learning Resource Center

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