



Foundations of Cancer Disease Sites Series

Brain Cancer

COURSE SYLLABUS (CDSM00BRAINODM24)

2024-2025

Course Authors & Facilitators:

Donalda MacDonald, RN, CON(C)

Allison Loucks, RN, MN, CON(C)

Course Format: eLearning

Contact Information and Technical Support: support@desouzainstitute.com

Technical Support: support@desouzainstitute.com

Registration: Required

Prerequisite: *Foundations in Oncology Nursing Practice or Cancer Care Basics*

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce you to primary brain cancer epidemiology, pathology, diagnosis, and treatment, covering the foundational knowledge you need to provide nursing care to patients with brain cancer and their families. This online course will build on what you learned in *Foundations of Oncology Nursing Practice* or *Cancer Care Basics*.

This course consists of **seven modules** in total. The first module will review the brain anatomy and histology relevant to understanding the diverse signs and symptoms of brain tumours. Module 02 and 03 will cover the diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of primary brain tumours. Primary brain tumours are a heterogeneous group of cancers with a wide range of outcomes and a variety of management strategies, so Module 04 – 06 will go into more depth about the diagnosis and treatment of three of the major types of brain cancer: **gliomas** (e.g., glioblastomas), **meningiomas**, and **vestibular schwannomas**. The final module will give an overview of pre and post-operative nursing care, the adverse effects of radiation therapy to the brain, and the identification and management of increased intracranial pressure.

The **final quiz** consists of a case study where you will apply your knowledge to the care of a particular patient living with brain cancer.

Although you can complete the various components of the course at your own pace, the course must be completed within **6 weeks from the time you register** for the course (this date can be found on the course information page in *My Account*).

About the *Foundations of Cancer Disease Sites Series*

The *Foundations of Cancer Disease Sites Series* will consist of **over twenty cancer disease site courses** that you can select and combine to fit your clinical practice needs. The first disease sites courses in the series are:

- Bladder Cancer
- Brain Cancer
- Breast Cancer
- Cervical Cancer
- Colorectal Cancer
- Esophageal Cancer
- Head and Neck Cancers
- Hematological Malignancies (Multiple Myeloma, Lymphoma, and Leukemia)
- Kidney Cancer
- Liver Cancer
- Lung Cancer
- Ovarian Cancer
- Pancreatic Cancer
- Prostate Cancer
- Sarcoma
- Skin Cancer
- Stomach Cancer
- Testicular Cancer

We will continue to update and add cancer disease sites to the course series:

<https://www.desouzainstitute.com/cdsm>

B. de Souza DESIGNATION CREDITS

Domain of Practice Treatment and Delivery of Evidence Based Care

Learning Hours 5 hours

de Souza Credit *You must complete a **minimum of 3** foundations of disease sites courses to earn de Souza credits.*

3 disease sites = 0.125 credits

6 disease sites = 0.25 credits

9 disease sites = 0.325 credits

12 and over disease sites = 0.5 credits

C. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify the known factors and possible factors that put a person at higher risk of developing primary brain cancer.
- Describe the overall prognosis for a person with a primary brain tumour and identify the prognostic factors that put a person at higher risk of dying from brain cancer.
- Anticipate the signs and symptoms of brain cancer, according to the anatomical location of the tumour within the brain.
- Recognize the unique signs and symptoms of a vestibular schwannoma.
- Identify the function of specialized MRI and CT techniques in the diagnosis of primary brain tumours.
- Summarize the World Health Organization (WHO) grading system for CNS cancers and explain why the TNM (tumour, node, metastases) staging system is not applicable to brain tumours.
- Explain the role of surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, and active surveillance in the treatment of low-grade and high-grade gliomas (astrocytomas, oligodendrogliomas, and ependymomas), meningiomas, and vestibular schwannomas.
- Anticipate the adverse effects and complications of brain tumour resection and radiation therapy.
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of increased intracranial pressure (IICP) and initiate nursing interventions.

D. MODE OF LEARNING

The eLearning environment fosters a self-directed approach. You can progress through the modules and exercises at a convenient time, at home or work.

- **eLearning Modules:** Modules were developed by the de Souza education team to reflect the latest knowledge in brain cancer. The content is up-to-date and includes interactive application exercises and links to the latest clinical guidelines.
- **Study Guides:** A printable study guide is available for each module that you can print and fill in as you progress through the interactive course modules.

E. MODES OF EVALUATION

As part of the evaluation process, you are required to complete the following:

- **Participant Baseline Survey:** This survey assesses your knowledge, attitude, confidence before you begin the eLearning modules for the course.
- **eLearning modules:** You must complete all modules by course end date.
- **Final Quiz:** There is one case-study based quiz in this course consisting of 8 questions. You must answer 6/8 questions correctly (75%) to pass. **Note:** the quiz is open book and you have two attempts at the quiz to achieve a passing grade. You are required to complete the quiz independently.
- **Participant Post-course Evaluation:** At the end of the course, you will be required to complete a “Participant Post Survey” where you can provide your feedback on whether the content met your professional practice needs. These surveys are facilitated electronically through eLearning

When you have successfully met all the above requirements, you will receive **5 learning hours** as well as credit towards obtaining your de Souza designation. An email will be sent to you containing instructions on how to download your **certificate of completion** via your “My account”.

F. EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

To be successful in completing this course, you are encouraged to set aside 1 to 2 hours each week to complete each section, as learning is self-directed. The total learning hours for this course is **5 hours**.

A writable study guide is available to download and fill in if you wish. The study guide is not mandatory and completion of it is not included in the learning hours. If you do complete the study guide you will have a copy of the course content for your future reference; once you complete the course you will no longer have access to the course modules and resources. There are a number of printable documents throughout the course, which you may want to save or print out.

Your course activity completion will be reflected in your **grade book**. You are expected to complete all modules and all other course requirements within **6 weeks** from the time you register for the course.

G. FACILITATOR AVAILABILITY

This course is **self-directed**. However, a course facilitator is available to:

- Answer your questions related to course content.
- Monitor the registration process.
- Be available to you for questions throughout the course.

You can expect the facilitator to respond to your questions within 24-hours during the week and within 48 hours on the weekend.

Your facilitators are:

- Donalda MacDonald
- Allison Loucks

Contact Information and Technical support is available by contacting support@desouzainstitute.com

H. COURSE AUTHORS' & FACILITATORS' BIOGRAPHY

Course Author & Facilitator

Donalda MacDonald, RN, CON(C)

Donalda has been an oncology nurse for 50 years working in both inpatient and outpatient units. Donalda has served on the board of directors for the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology. Donalda holds certification in oncology from the CNA. She has done item writing and exam review for the CNA Oncology Certification Exam. Donalda was nominated by her oncology peers and was one of 100 nurses from across Canada to receive the CNA Centennial Award honoring her work in education of novice oncology nurses. In 2014 she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology. She was the recipient of the Pfizer Award of Excellence in Education in 2023.

Facilitator

Allison Loucks, RN, MN, CON(C)

Allison has 23 years of nursing experience, 16 of them in Oncology. In 2011, as an Advanced Practice Nurse Educator in the Acute Care Oncology Program at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, she supported nurses in both ambulatory and inpatient settings to enhance their knowledge and competency in symptom assessment and management, and in urgent/emergent oncology nursing interventions. In 2015, she joined the Geriatric Oncology Program as a Clinical Nurse Specialist. Through research and publications, Allison and her team articulated the needs of this vulnerable population and identified tools required to provide adequate care.

Allison holds a CNA certification in oncology since 2015. She was the recipient of the 2016 Esther and Saul Baker Award in Geriatrics at University Health Network (UHN) and Mount Sinai Hospital. She earned her Master of Nursing at Athabasca University in 2019.

In 2023, Allison joined the Advanced Practice Nursing team at the Odette Cancer Centre at Sunnybrook Hospital, where she collaborated in numerous quality improvement strategies to enhance cancer care delivery. In 2024, she became a Facilitator in the de Souza Institute Provincial Standardized Chemotherapy and Biotherapy course. She recently joined the de Souza Institute as an Advance Practice Nurse Educator.

I. VIRTUAL LIBRARY

de Souza Institute has a virtual library that can be accessed to those registered in this course or any other de Souza Institute continuing education program. This resource enables you to access over 1500 e-Journals, 200 e-books and 8 on-line databases such as CINAHL or Ovid-Medline. You can use the virtual library to access the required reading materials for your course. The virtual library can be accessed 24 hours a day at any location that has internet access using a login and password.

The direct link is <https://library.desouzainstitute.com/login>.

J. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

eLearning Centre Orientation

The eLearning Centre Orientation is designed to introduce you to online learning and to help you understand how to navigate through the de Souza Institute eLearning centre and courses. It is strongly recommended that you complete this orientation so that you will be able to successfully navigate de Souza's eLearning environment.

de Souza Institute Support

If you have questions about the content of a course please email your course facilitator.

If you need assistance accessing or navigating the eLearning Centre, please refer to the eLearning Orientation course. If you have questions or have any general technical difficulties, please contact support@desouzainstitute.com.

K. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Click the links below to review de Souza's Policies.

[Academic Honesty and Copyright Policy](#)

[Cancellations, Incomplete and No Show Policy](#)

[Request for Accommodation Policy](#)

Course content and resources are based on provincial and national best practice guidelines. Please consult educators within your organization if you have specific questions related to local protocols and policies.

If you are experiencing difficulty completing this course in a timely way, please review the above policies and contact support@desouzainstitute.com.