

Dr. Mary J. Esplen

Affiliate Scientist, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre; Executive Director, de Souza Institute at University Health Network

Toronto, ON, CA

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Biography

Dr. Mary Jane Esplen is a Scientist, Clinician and Full Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto. She has dedicated her research to the field of psychosocial oncology and to improving clinical outcomes and services. She is known for developing and testing new psychosocial interventions or tools to measure experiences following a cancer diagnosis or for those who undergo genetic testing. Dr. Esplen is the inaugural Executive Director of the innovative de Souza Institute, established in 2008 at University Health Network and funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The Institute is now a national organization and provides current, innovative and accessible sources of educational support, professional development and career counseling to health care professionals serving patients and families in oncology or in hospice palliative care. Programs range from prevention to end of life care, and the Institute offers a unique learning pathway to achieve “de Souza Designations” - a gold standard demonstrating specialist expertise in cancer care. The Institute has expanded recently, offering its programs across Canada.

Dr. Esplen is a past President of the Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology and chaired the Psychosocial Subcommittee, Ontario Provincial Advisory Board for New Technologies in Genetics to inform new health services for genetic testing. She continues to work with the Ministry of Health for a variety of groups, from introduction of new technologies to end-of-life care. She serves on several boards of directors to support palliative care or the use of music in health care. She recently completed a trial of a group therapy to address body image and sexual functioning concerns among cancer patients. She is now planning a trial to test music in hospice and palliative care settings. In 2011, Dr. Esplen received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology (CAPO) for her contributions to the field of psychosocial oncology.

Industry Expertise

Education/Learning, Research

Areas of Expertise

Psychosocial Oncology, Cancer, Clinical Research, Lynch Syndrome, Pancreatic Cancer, Cancer Genetics, Women's Mental Health, Women-Centered Psychotherapies, Guided Imagery, BRCA1/2, Colorectal Cancer genes, Impact of genetic testing

Affiliations

Canadian Association for Psychosocial Oncology: Past President and current member, Ontario Provincial Advisory Board for New Technologies in Genetics : Chair Psychosocial Committee, University of Toronto : Vice Chair Basic and Clinical Sciences Department of Psychiatry; Chair of Decanal Committee, Ontario Institute for Cancer Research : Affiliate Scientist, Mount Sinai Hospital : Associate Scientist / Member

Event Appearances

Presentation and panel discussant - Rethink, Breast Fest Film Festival: “Body Image, Sexuality & Breast Cancer”

Life is the Main Thing,

Education

Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute

Post Doctoral Training Cancer Genetics, Psycho-oncology & Women's Mental Health

University of Toronto

Ph.D. Medical Science

University of Toronto, Department of Psychiatry

Research Fellowship Psychosomatic Medicine

University of Toronto

M.Sc.N. Psychiatry

University of Toronto

B.Sc.N. Nursing

Accomplishments

Lifetime Achievement Award

2011

Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology (CAPO)

The Psychotherapy Award for Academic Excellence

2007

Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto

Distinguished Alumnae Award

2004

Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto

Alan Wu Prize for Clinical Science Division
1996

Institute of Medical Science, University of Toronto (thesis dissertation)

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