# Interview Responses: Communication Officer, National Cancer Institute of Kenya

Below are sample responses from a Communication Officer at the National Cancer Institute of Kenya, based on the structured interview guide.

## Section 1: Professional Background & Relevance

Q: Could you share a bit about your role and how long you’ve been working with cancer patients or survivors?

A: I currently serve as a Communication Officer at the National Cancer Institute of Kenya. In this role, I’ve been working for close to [X years/months], supporting programs that focus on cancer awareness, patient engagement, and stakeholder communication. While I’m not directly involved in medical treatment, my role allows me to interact with patients, survivors, caregivers, and healthcare professionals, and I get to see first-hand the communication and emotional support needs that go beyond clinical care.

Q: In your experience, what are the biggest challenges your patients or clients face outside of medical treatment?

A: A recurring challenge is the feeling of isolation after diagnosis. Many patients find it difficult to talk openly about their experiences, especially due to stigma, fear, or lack of awareness. Beyond that, access to reliable information and platforms for emotional and peer support is still limited, which makes the cancer journey feel very lonely for many people.

## Section 2: Current Support Systems

Q: What resources do you currently recommend to patients who need emotional or social support?

A: We usually encourage patients to join hospital-based support groups, patient associations, or community networks. We also provide educational materials and sometimes connect them with psychosocial counselors.

Q: What gaps or limitations have you observed in these existing resources?

A: The main gap is accessibility. Not every hospital or county has active support groups, and many patients outside urban areas lack access. Some groups are also informal and not consistent. Patients often ask for platforms where they can connect with others like them—whether survivors, caregivers, or people in active treatment.

## Section 3: Community & Connection Needs

Q: From your perspective, how important is peer-to-peer support in the cancer journey?

A: Peer-to-peer support is extremely important. Medical care treats the disease, but peer connections help heal the emotional and social wounds. When patients meet others who truly understand what they’re going through, it reduces fear and builds resilience.

Q: Have you seen examples where patients benefited significantly from connecting with others in similar situations?

A: Yes. For instance, I’ve seen breast cancer survivors mentor newly diagnosed patients. The reassurance that ‘I’ve been where you are, and I made it through’ makes a huge difference. It builds hope and encourages treatment adherence.

Q: If you could design an ideal support community for your patients or clients, what would it look like?

A: It would be accessible both online and offline, available in local languages, and moderated to ensure accuracy and safety. It should bring together patients, survivors, caregivers, and professionals, and provide resources such as education, counseling, and peer discussions.

## Section 4: OnCare Solution Exploration

Q: How do you think your patients would respond to a platform like OnCare?

A: I believe patients would respond positively. Many are already asking for spaces where they can connect safely and privately with others who understand their journey. A structured and well-managed platform like OnCare would fill a real gap.

Q: What are your thoughts on the rewards system to encourage participation and support?

A: That’s a great idea. Recognition motivates people to contribute, and a reward system could help sustain engagement. As long as it’s meaningful and encourages genuine connection rather than competition, it would add value.

Q: From a healthcare professional’s perspective, which features would be most valuable to you in supporting your patients?

A: Features such as verified information hubs, referral resources, secure chat, and the ability for professionals to share updates or answer general questions would be very useful. Data insights on patient needs and concerns could also help us design better communication strategies.

## Section 5: Professional Integration

Q: Would you feel comfortable recommending a social support platform like OnCare to your patients?

A: Yes, I would—provided it’s credible, secure, and culturally sensitive. At NCI-K, we always want to direct patients to reliable and safe resources. A platform like OnCare, once validated, could complement the support we offer.

Q: What would make you more confident in introducing such a resource to them?

A: Assurance of privacy and confidentiality, verified health information, and evidence that the platform is moderated responsibly. Additionally, collaboration with recognized health institutions would give us confidence to endorse it.

## Wrap-up Response

Thank you for sharing OnCare with us. I see a lot of potential in a platform like this to bridge the gap in social and emotional support for patients, survivors, and caregivers. I’d be interested in exploring a demo to understand how we could possibly integrate it into our communication and patient support efforts.