

# EXPLORING CANCER AND STIGMA

CULTURALLY AWARE SCREENING PROGRAMS, COMPASSIONATE HEALTH-CARE PROVIDERS AND SUPPORTIVE LANGUAGE ALL CONTRIBUTE TO REDUCING STIGMA AROUND CANCER. FROM TALKING OPENLY ABOUT DIAGNOSIS TO UNDERSTANDING PALLIATIVE CARE, WE LOOK AT SOME OF THE WAYS PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS ARE HELPING SHIFT PERSPECTIVES AROUND CANCER FOR THE BETTER.

## THE EVOLUTION OF PALLIATIVE CARE

BY COLLEEN BIONDI

**L**ike many aspects of the cancer experience, the concept of palliative care may be unsettling. After all, there is a strong assumption it is associated with end of life. But this is inaccurate. The truth is, palliative care is much broader and includes services such as pain and symptom management that can improve quality of life and, in some cases, actually extend lives.

Fortunately, people's perception of palliative care is changing, says Reanne Booker, a nurse practitioner at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre. Booker is also a PhD student in nursing with the faculty of human and social development at the University of Victoria, and a casual employee at Palliative and End-of-Life Care Services at Foothills Medical Centre in Calgary. Her thesis is exploring perceptions of palliative care and the benefits of early integration.

Booker tells us why the evolution of palliative care will make a positive difference for individuals living with life-limiting conditions, and shares her current research involving early integration of palliative care specifically for people living with blood cancers. >



ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT CARTER