

# NEXT STEPS: A Randomized Controlled Trial Of A Dyadic Intervention For Advanced Cancer Patients And Caregivers

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## Background:

- Advanced cancer patients and their caregivers experience high rates of psychological symptom burden.
- Patients and caregivers are also often poorly prepared to engage in self-care/caregiving during cancer treatment and report decrements in adaptive communication and relationship functioning over time.

## Objective:

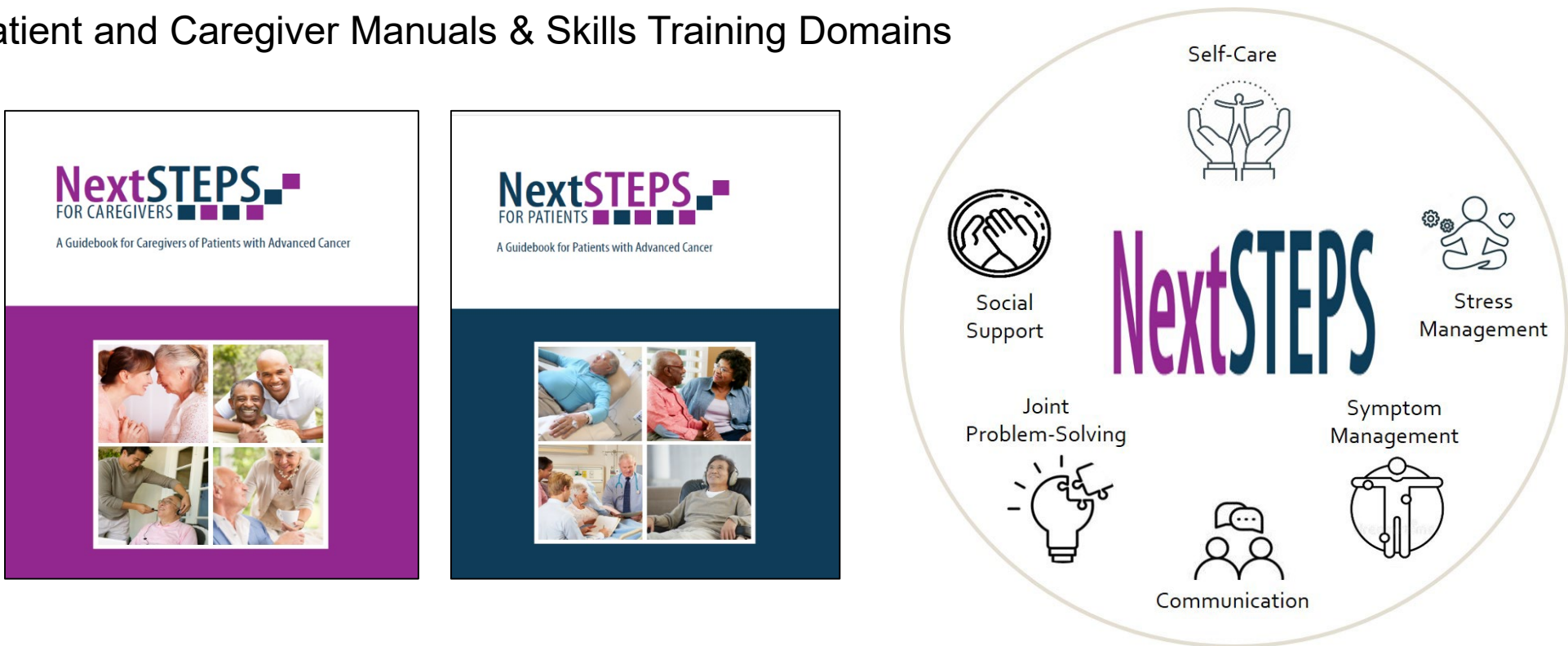
- This study tested the efficacy of a 6-session, telephone-based dyadic intervention that was developed for advanced cancer patients and their caregivers, called Next Steps.
- The treatment effects of Next Steps compared with usual medical care in improving patient and caregiver psychological and marital functioning were examined.

## NEXT STEPS:

**GOAL:** To improve the psychological and relationship functioning of advanced cancer patients and their caregivers

NEXT STEPS provides skills training in 6 domains that are central to patient and caregiver psychosocial adjustment (see Figure 1). The six domains represent the “Next Steps” that patients and caregivers should take after a diagnosis of advanced cancer

Figure 1. Patient and Caregiver Manuals & Skills Training Domains



## Results:

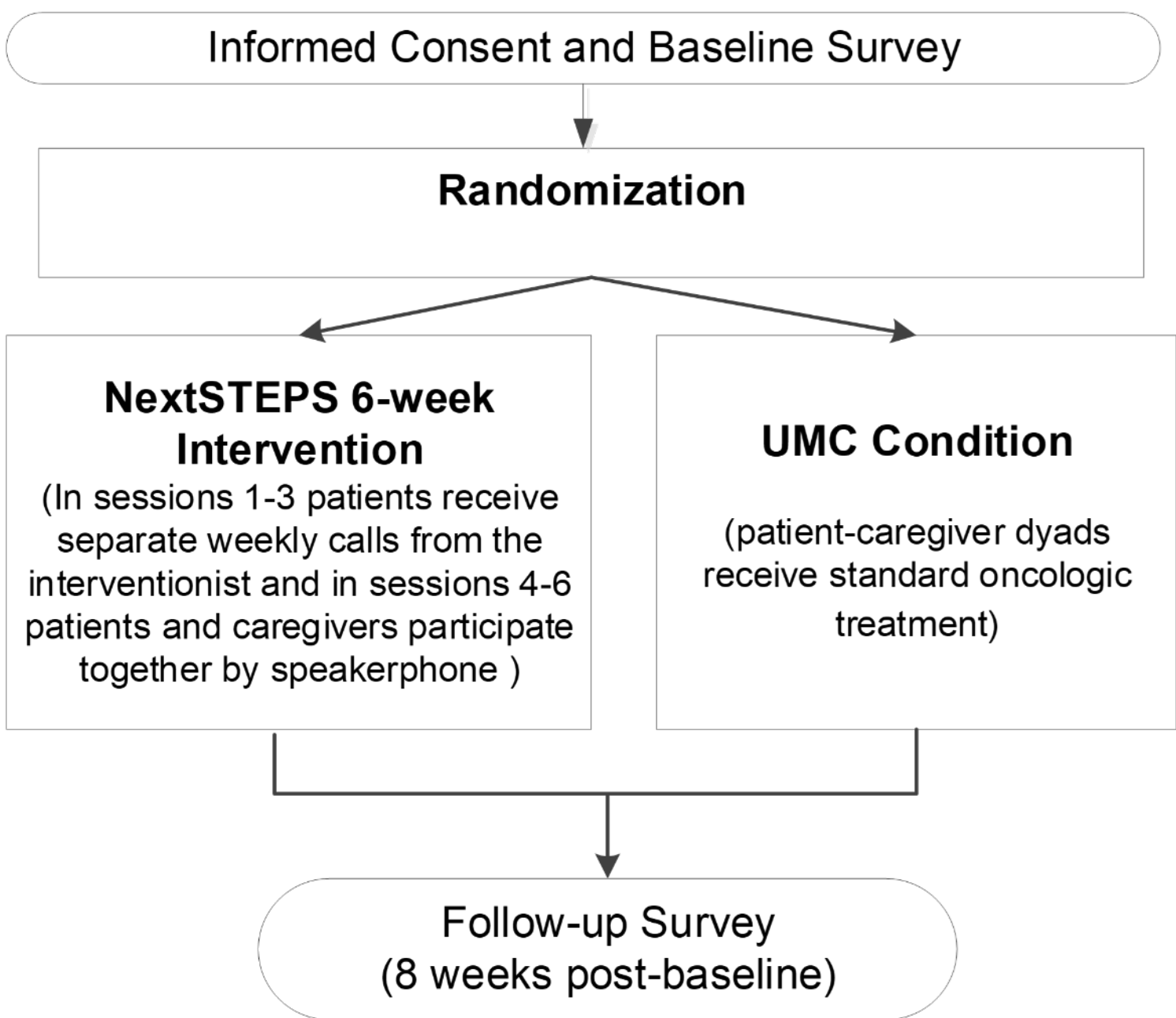
- Feasibility:** Solid recruitment (60%) and low attrition
- Acceptability:** Solid homework completion (M=3 out of 5, SD=1.2); Participants rated the program favorably in terms of: convenience, helpfulness, and relevance
- Efficacy:**

Outcomes	Cohen's d	
	Patients	Caregivers
Anxiety (PROMIS)	-.65	-.32
Depression (PROMIS)	-.67	-.33
Relationship Functioning (DAS-7)	.62	.30
Caregiver Burden (Zarit)	n/a	n.s.
Self-Efficacy (CBI)	1.3	1.1

## Conclusion:

- Findings support the feasibility, acceptability, and efficacy.
- By empowering patients and caregivers with the skills to coordinate care and meet the challenges of advanced cancer together, this intervention holds great promise for improving cancer supportive care.

## Trial Design:



## Consort Diagram:

