

Anger or frustration

This information is about managing anger or frustration. Having cancer means dealing with issues that may frighten and challenge you. Everyone reacts differently and there is no right or wrong way to feel.

It is natural to feel angry or frustrated when you have cancer. This sometimes hides other uncomfortable emotions, such as fear or sadness.

You may feel angry or frustrated because:

- you are going through treatment and having to cope with side effects
- the cancer is affecting your relationships, family life, work or social life
- it seems so unfair that you are ill.

We all show anger in different ways. Some people get impatient or shout. Others get upset and tearful. You may get angry with the people close to you. Anger or frustration can become a problem if they harm you or the people around you.

Tips for managing anger or frustration

- Try not to hide your feelings. Tell people you are angry or frustrated with the situation and not with them.
- Look out for warning signs that you are getting angry. You may notice your heart is beating faster, you are breathing more quickly, your body is tense or you are clenching your fists.
- When you recognise that you are getting angry, count to 10, breathe deeply or walk away from the situation. This will give you time to calm down, think more clearly and decide how to react.
- If you cannot let go of your angry feelings, try hitting a pillow, screaming or having a cry. This will release tension and not harm anyone.
- Talk about what is making you angry or frustrated. A family member or friend could give you a different perspective on a situation. You can also call our support line, or join our Online Community or a support group. This will help you share your feelings.
- Keeping a diary or journal can help you express and release anger and frustration. Write down how you are feeling and what makes your mood better or worse.
- Finding ways to help yourself relax can reduce your stress and anger. Listen to soothing music, meditate or do muscle relaxation exercises. Work off your anger through regular physical activity, such as walking, swimming or yoga.
- Try not to feel guilty about your angry thoughts. Anger can be a strong emotion, and you may find you can use it in a more positive way. It may help you focus on what is important in your life or start a new hobby.
- Look after yourself and avoid alcohol and recreational drugs. They can make it harder for you to control your temper. They can even lead to aggressive behaviour.
- If you are angry most of the time or it is starting to affect your life, talk to your GP. They can refer you to a counsellor or psychologist, or arrange for you to do an anger management course.

Local resources:

Resource	Contact details

National resources:

Resource	Contact details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) 	<p>www.bacp.co.uk Tel 01455 883 300</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental Health Foundation 	<p>www.mentalhealth.org.uk Tel 020 7803 1100</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mind 	<p>www.mind.org.uk Infoline 0300 123 3393</p>

Further information

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/your-emotions

www.macmillan.org.uk/community

Our booklets and leaflets are available to order free on be.macmillan.org.uk

- **How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer**
- **Life after cancer treatment**
- **Your feelings after cancer treatment**

More information and support

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm, or visit macmillan.org.uk

Deaf or hard of hearing? Call using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Life app. Speak another language? Telephone interpreters are available. Please tell us, in English, the language you would like to use.

We produce information in a range of formats and languages. To order these, visit macmillan.org.uk/otherformats or call our support line.

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