

Hopelessness

Being told you have cancer can often make you think about the future. There are many things that suddenly feel uncertain. You may worry about how you will cope with the cancer and its treatment. You may be scared that the treatment is not going to work and have fears about what the future will be like. You may worry that you may not live as long as you thought you would.

This can lead to feelings of sadness and sometimes depression. You may feel hopeless and feel that you have nothing to look forward to. You may ask "Is there any point going on?"

It is important not to ignore your feelings. They are a natural response to what has happened. But there are things you can do to look after yourself. These may help you cope as you recover. There is no right way to deal with what has happened to you.

Tips for managing hopelessness

- It is normal to feel hopeless at times. But if you feel like this for more than a couple of weeks talk to your cancer doctor, GP or specialist nurse.
- Having something to look forward to can help you feel more positive about life. Going back to work or starting to do the things you did before are important steps forward.
- If you find it hard to make the effort to do these things, try to do one small thing at a time and celebrate your successes.
- Many people get support by talking to close family members or friends. Or you could join a support group or online community.
- Talking one-to-one with a trained counsellor can help you sort out your feelings. Your GP can give you details and make a referral.
- **Help to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE)** is a course to help people after cancer treatment. It was developed by Coventry University and Macmillan Cancer Support. The course is run in small groups that meet once a week for 6 weeks. It is free and takes place at different locations in the UK.
- If you are frightened by your feelings and emotions, or if you are becoming very depressed, you can get help from a healthcare professional. This could be from:
 - your healthcare team at the hospital
 - your GP
 - a mental health professional
 - a local charity
 - organisations such as Macmillan.
- If you have any thoughts about self-harm or suicide you should contact your cancer doctor, GP or specialist nurse straight away.

Local resources:

Resource	Contact details

National resources:

Resource	Contact details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) • UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) • Mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.bacp.co.uk Tel 01455 883300 • www.psychotherapy.org.uk Tel 0207 014 9955 • www.mind.org.uk Tel 0300 123 3393

Further information

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

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

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

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**, 7 days a week, 8am 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 Lite 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.