

# Spiritual concerns

Many people find their faith can give them emotional support and strength during their illness. After a cancer diagnosis, some people become more aware of religious beliefs or spiritual feelings. They may want to think and talk about what life means to them and explore their experiences and beliefs.

Being diagnosed with an advanced cancer or approaching the end of life is a time when some people think about spiritual beliefs and the meaning of life. Other people may find themselves questioning their faith when they are told they have cancer or that their cancer has come back or spread.

Spirituality can be expressed in many ways, such as through music, arts, nature, or how you relate to your family or community. Some people find comfort in prayer or meditation. And many get support from knowing other people are praying for them.

## Things that may help

- You may find it helpful to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone you trust. You only need to share as much as you want to, at a time when you feel ready. You can choose who you want to talk to and who you feel will be able to support you. This may be a family member or close friend.
- Some people find it easier to talk to someone outside of their family and friends. Counsellors are trained to listen and help people deal with hard situations. Talking one to one with a trained counsellor can help you express and understand your feelings. It can also help you find ways to cope with these feelings or the problems causing them.
- You may find it helpful to talk to a religious or spiritual leader or advisor. They can offer emotional and spiritual comfort, and help you feel more at peace with your situation. If you have not been to religious services regularly before or are not sure what you believe, you can still talk to someone. This may be a priest, rabbi, imam or other spiritual advisor, depending on your faith or preference. They often deal with uncertainty and will not be shocked.
- If you are not religious, do not be put off talking to a religious leader. Hospital and hospice chaplains offer spiritual support to everyone, no matter what they believe. They are used to dealing with uncertainty and being with people who are distressed. They can also be very good listeners and may be able to help you work through your thoughts and feelings.
- If you prefer to talk to a non-religious person, Humanists UK has volunteers who can give non-religious pastoral support.
- Hospices usually provide spiritual support for people of all faiths or no faith. This is often available through their day services.

**Local resources:**

Resource	Contact details

**National resources:**

Resource	Contact details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)</li> </ul>	<p><b>www.bacp.co.uk</b>  <b>Tel 01455 883 300</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humanists UK</li> </ul>	<p><b>www.humanistcare.org.uk</b>  <b>Tel 020 7324 3060</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marie Curie</li> </ul>	<p><b>www.mariecurie.org.uk</b>  <b>Tel 0800 090 2309</b></p>

**Further information**

Our booklets and leaflets are available to order free on [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk)

- **Coping with advanced 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**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm, or visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://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](http://macmillan.org.uk/otherformats) or call our support line.

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