

Thinking about the future

This information is about thinking about the future and looking ahead. Cancer often causes people to think about their lives and their priorities. Some people make big changes, such as changing their job. Other people start a new hobby. Doing something new may help you feel better and more in control.

Having something to look forward to can help you feel less worried and more positive about life. The things you did before the cancer will slowly start to fit back into your life. Going back to work or starting to do the things you did before can be important steps forward.

Although you would not have chosen it, having cancer may change you in positive ways. You may rethink what is important to you. You may focus more on your relationships with family, friends or a partner. Or you may decide to do things you have always wanted to do.

It is important not to ignore your feelings after cancer treatment. They are a natural response to what has happened. But there are things you can do to look after yourself as you recover. You might want to take time to think about what you have been through. Or you may find it more helpful to think about the future. There is no right way or time to deal with what has happened.

Tips for thinking about the future

- Doing something new can help distract and relax you. Some hobbies help you express your feelings – for example, playing a musical instrument or painting.
- You may decide to be more active. You could start cycling, doing yoga, dancing, or join a walking group. You do not have to be good at these activities to enjoy them. Look out for any groups or classes in your area. Find something you enjoy and feel comfortable with.
- When you feel ready, you may decide to do some volunteer work. You could try to find something that matters to you or makes you feel part of your community.
- Set yourself small goals that you know you can meet. For example, if your goal is to be able to enjoy a holiday without feeling anxious, you could start with a day trip. It can be somewhere you know well and can travel to easily. You may only stay for a short time. The important thing to remember is that this is a step in the right direction.
- As you achieve each goal, your confidence will start to grow. Remember to notice every success, no matter how small it seems. You might want to celebrate or reward yourself somehow.
- You may not know how cancer will affect your work, now or in the future. It is a good idea to talk to your manager early on.
- You may decide not to go back to work. You may choose to do something different. Going back to work may depend on the type of work you do or how much your income is affected.

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 020 7014 9955 • www.mind.org.uk Tel 0300 123 3393

Further information

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

www.macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups

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
- Worrying about cancer coming back

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.