

Talking or being understood

You may find [talking about cancer](#) upsetting or uncomfortable. But it can help you get the support you need. This might be from family, friends, an employer or colleagues, or your healthcare team.

Talking can help if you feel worried or uncertain. It can help you cope better with difficulties and give you some control over your situation. It can also help you to make decisions that are right for you.

You may feel positive. Or you may act positive to make other people feel better. If you are really worried about the future, it is important people know, so they can support you. It is better for your family and friends to know the truth now, rather than find out later.

You may have trusted family and friends who can give you a lot of support. But even with supportive people around you, it can be hard to talk about cancer.

It may be easier to talk with someone you do not know. Talking with a [counsellor](#) can sometimes help. Counsellors are trained to listen and help people talk through their problems.

You may feel your healthcare team are too busy to talk about your feelings. Be honest with healthcare staff about how you are feeling and about any problems or symptoms you have. This will make it easier for them to give you the help you need. If you do not understand what you have been told, ask them to explain again.

Tips for talking about how you feel

- Try to find a good place to talk. Being somewhere quiet and comfortable can help the conversation.
- The first time you talk with someone, think about how much you want to share. You may want to tell them the type of cancer you have and which treatments you may need.
- Remember to say if you need a break. You can talk more at a later time.
- Sometimes it is easier to talk over the phone, or write a letter or email. If you are far away, this may be the only option.
- There will often be friends and family who want to help. Try starting a conversation. Say what you need, even if you just want them to listen.
- Do not worry about silences. Sometimes you or the other person may not know what to say. Holding hands, hugging or just sitting together may help.
- Other people may struggle to accept things or may not know the best way to help. You may feel resentful about having to deal with this. Try not to push them away as it can make things worse.
- Talking with a trained counsellor can help you understand your feelings. It can also help you find ways to deal them. Some people find it easier to talk to people who are not involved with them or their care.
- You might find it difficult to [ask your medical team questions](#) and remember their answers. Take someone with you to appointments. They can help you remember or write things down for you.

Macmillan Cancer Support resources

We have more information on our [website](#), including audiobooks. Or you can order our free booklets and leaflets on orders.macmillan.org.uk such as:

- [MAC11646 Talking about cancer](#)
- [MAC11631 Talking with someone who has cancer](#)
- [MAC5766 Talking to children and teenagers when an adult has cancer](#)

We produce information in a [range of formats](#) and [languages](#). To order these, visit our website or call our support line.

Help to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE) is a course to help people after cancer treatment. It is a free 6-week self-management course that is run online. It was developed by Hope for the Community and Macmillan Cancer Support. To find out more, visit macmillan.org.uk/hope-programme

Further Macmillan 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 where you can [chat online](#) to one of our team.

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

Or if you want to share your experiences or ask questions, you can find others who understand on our [Online Community](#). Our free [Macmillan Buddy service](#) can arrange weekly calls with a friendly volunteer who understands what you're going through.

Other useful contact details

- [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy \(BACP\)](#)
- [Maggie's Centres](#)
- [UK Council for Psychotherapy \(UKCP\)](#)

Notes and questions
