

A photograph of a Black hairdresser with her hair in a bun, smiling warmly while styling the hair of a Black woman with curly hair. The woman is also smiling broadly and is wearing a dark blue salon cape. The background shows a typical hair salon environment with shelves of products and a mirror.

**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

The beauty of support

**Talking hair culture & cancer taboos
within black hairdressing salons**

We've put together everything we know about helping people with cancer in this Macmillan Community Resource for Hairdressers.

Let's help our community deal with cancer together.

SCAN HERE



Macmillan Community Resource for Hairdressers

Introduction

This booklet includes information about different Macmillan services and how to make a salon feel like a 'safe space' where Black women can break taboos around discussing cancer. We hope that, by sharing this, we can create a better future for women from African and Caribbean backgrounds who are affected by cancer. That's the power of sharing.

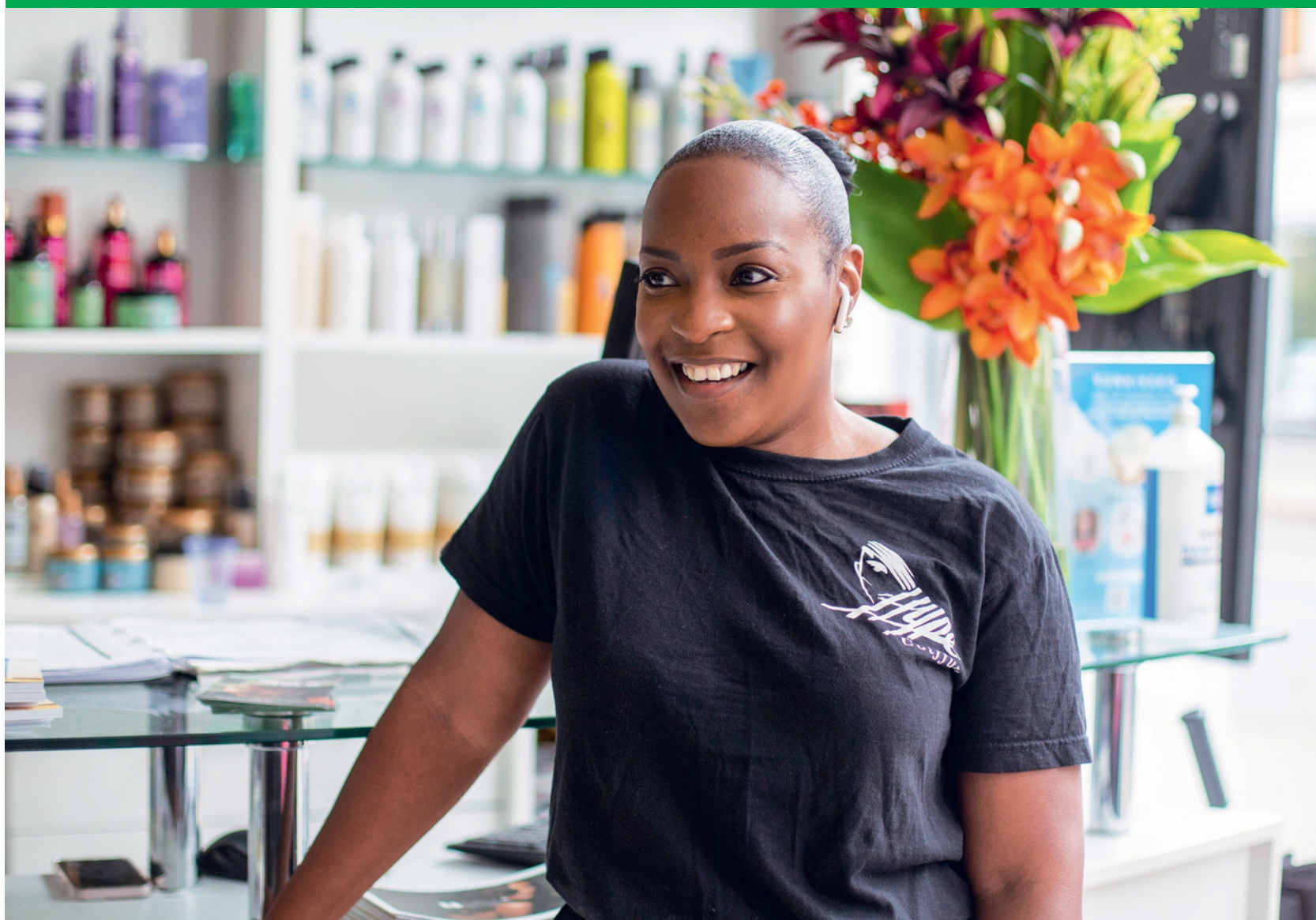
Meeting people where they are

Cancer has a big impact on people's everyday lives and in all kinds of unexpected ways. Macmillan provides support for many of the impacts of cancer and cancer treatment. All people are different, so we have a range of different ways of sharing information.

Your clients may need practical information and support with day-to-day tasks to help take the strain off them and their families. They might need financial support.

We can also offer support for your client's emotional needs. Your clients can contact our Macmillan Support Line for free on **0808 808 00 00**, chat online or email us at **contact@macmillan.org.uk**. We also have information in different languages and accessible formats.

We've also included some ideas about how to talk about cancer. This is based on what people in our cancer support groups have told us over the years. Thank you for being part of the conversation.





Macmillan Cancer Support for changing times

We have over 100 years of experience in helping people living with cancer. When we were founded in 1911, cancer was something people never talked about, and to have cancer was seen as something shameful. Times and attitudes have changed, and we've continually adapted the support we offer to make sure it's right for everyone today.

Macmillan services include:

- Macmillan website and Online Community
- Macmillan Support Line to speak to nurses and advisers
- Local support groups
- Volunteer buddy services
- Information about cancer types and treatments
- Information and support centres

Helping your clients access support from Macmillan

Your clients might be looking for information to help them understand their cancer type, the medical world, and what to expect from the different stages they may experience, including going through diagnosis and treatment.

They may want to know what to do to have the best chance of a positive outcome. Some of your clients will get all the information they need from the Macmillan website. Other people will need different kinds of help, which we offer as well.

Your clients can contact the Macmillan Support Line for free on **0808 808 00 00** or by online chat 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week. They can also email **contact@macmillan.org.uk**.

Personalised support

Macmillan has information leaflets available in 16 languages and in other formats including audiobooks. We also have an interpreter service available on the Macmillan Support Line. Just call and tell us in English the language you need. So, if you are speaking with one of your clients in a particular language, or you know they have additional needs, you can show them what support is available and how to access it.

The Macmillan website

The Macmillan website has lots of information. This includes different cancer types, tests, screening, getting diagnosed, treatments, living with cancer and end of life care. People can create an account that will help personalise the content that is relevant to them. Clients can also complete an online personal guide and sign up for regular emails that match their needs at different stages of their cancer journey.

Your clients can visit our website for information about managing money worries and find out what benefits they may be entitled to. They can also complete an online money and cancer guide to get personalised information to help them.

Local support information Search 'Macmillan In Your Area' to find local services for people living with cancer.

Booklets and information

We provide cancer information in 16 different languages and formats, including audiobooks, Braille, British Sign Language videos, easy-read booklets and large print. These are available from our website, or your client can visit their local Information and Support Centre to speak to someone in person and pick up leaflets.

For information specifically for you and for Black women affected by cancer, go to www.macmillan.org.uk/thebeautyofsupport



The Macmillan Support Line

Call 0808 808 00 00 for free. We are open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.

The Macmillan Support Line offers confidential support to people living with cancer and their loved ones. From answering clinical questions to helping ease money worries, our trained advisers, including cancer information specialist nurses can provide emotional support and practical information about all aspects of cancer.

1. Cancer Information and Support Advisers

Our advisers provide emotional support and a hugely diverse range of practical information. They can also direct people to other specialist services relevant to their individual needs.

2. Cancer Information Nurse Specialists

Experienced cancer nurses use their clinical skills to talk through information on symptoms and diagnosis, treatment, living with cancer and palliative care.

3. Specialist financial support

Your clients may be worried about money and are looking for practical guidance to help them manage. They might want to know what support they are entitled to and how they can access it. They can speak to our trained money advisers for information and support.





Emotional support

It helps to talk. Your clients can contact the Macmillan Support Line about how they are feeling for free on **0808 808 00 00**. They can also chat online or email the team at **contact@macmillan.org.uk**. They are there to listen and give support.

Your clients can get help from others living with cancer from our Online Community, from our local Support and Information Centres and from our Macmillan Buddy volunteers.

Online Community

The Online Community is a safe website where people living with cancer can share their experiences and get emotional and practical support from people in a similar situation.

People can also get advice from Macmillan professionals in the Ask an Expert area.

The Online Community can be accessed through the Macmillan website at any time, day or night. It can be used anonymously, in confidence and from the comfort of home. People of all ages and regardless of where they are in their cancer experience, can use the community to talk about anything cancer-related.

There are different forums within the Online Community, including groups for people with different types of cancer, people with children, or family and friends.

The Online Community is moderated and supported by Macmillan employees, medical experts, and volunteers. It is a safe place where everyone supports each other.





Macmillan Buddies Service

Macmillan Buddies is a free support service for people living with cancer where they can talk to a trained volunteer. It's a confidential, safe space for people to talk through 8 to 12 weekly telephone or video calls with the same person.

All Macmillan Buddy volunteers are trained to listen and offer emotional support. Many people tell us it's a really valuable service where they can talk about how they're feeling in a way they can't do with friends and family.

Visit: www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/get-help to find out more about our support services.

Creating a place for the conversations that matter

Someone with cancer may feel fear, anger or frustration. Talking to a good listener can help. You're probably already skilled at this, but here are some tips to help your clients who have cancer.

- Let them talk when they are ready. Don't feel you have to talk about cancer.
- You don't need to have the answers. Listening can be enough. Even if it goes quiet for a time, try not to be afraid of the silence or feel you have to fill it.
- Set a limit on how long you will talk. Talking about feelings can be tiring.
- Try to listen instead of thinking about what you are going to say next. When the person with cancer is talking, please pay attention to what they are saying.
- Respect the other person's feelings. They might want to talk about things you find hard to hear.
- Try not to say that everything will be fine or encourage them to be positive. It can sound as if you are not listening to their worries. It is better to let people speak honestly about their feelings.
- Repeat back what you have heard. This helps you check you have got it right and shows you are listening. You might say things like, 'So you mean that...?'. You may find your own way of saying this, especially if you know each other well.
- It's not helpful to tell the person about other people's stories. Cancer is different for everyone. They will get the specific information they need from their healthcare team.
- Use humour cautiously. Sometimes it can help, but it may make things difficult if they are feeling sad or worried. Resist the urge to cheer them up.
- Showing empathy is everything. If they start to cry as they talk, you could say something like, 'I can see how upsetting that is for you'. If you are close to them, you could simply sit with them and hold their hand or find a quiet space in the salon.



Listening deeply

Listening is just as important as talking. We all like to feel that we have been heard, especially when talking about something serious. You may feel unsure about how to comfort the person you care for. But just listening to someone when they talk can make a real difference. You don't need to have all the answers. Listening and talking can help you both understand what the other person is feeling.

The power of silence

It's also important to have conversations about things other than cancer. There will be times when you prefer to talk about day-to-day subjects. Or sometimes you may just want to carry on doing your client's hair quietly. It's ok not to talk all the time. There may be times when you want to talk, but your client does not. Or the other way around.

Take your cues from the person with cancer. Ask them if they would like to talk about their experience. It is best to allow them to decide when to talk and how much to share.

Show support without words. Your body and facial expressions can also show your message of care and support. Keep eye contact, listen attentively and avoid distractions when talking. One important way to provide support is to share some silence without needing to drown it out with chatter.

Choose your words carefully. Make sure to acknowledge how difficult this experience is for the person. Carefully choosing what you say can help you show your support without being dismissive or avoiding the topic. For example, it is better to say "I don't know what to say" than to stop talking.

Things you can say to show your support:

- I'm sorry this has happened to you
- If you ever feel like talking, I'm here to listen
- What are you thinking of doing?
- How can I help?
- I care about you
- I'm thinking about you

Things you might say that could be unsupportive:

- I know just how you feel
- I know just what you should do
- I know someone who had the exact same diagnosis
- I'm sure you'll be fine
- Don't worry
- How long do you have

Practice active listening

To be an active listener, give your full attention. Avoid thinking about what to say next, hurrying the conversation, or forcing it to a conclusion. Phrase your questions carefully and limit the number of questions that you ask in a conversation.



You're not just a hairdresser, you're running a community centre and creating a place for conversations that matter. Because your clients are more than just customers and your business is more than a business, you can help us help your customers affected by cancer. Together, we can be there for the people who need us. Thank you for getting involved.

Useful links for hairdressers and clients:

- Raising Your Voice toolkit
macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/get-help/raising-your-voice-toolkit
- From Me to You, The Art of Survival, a support group for Black Communities frommetoyou-uk.org/
- REVAMP, a UK-based wig revamp, repair, and maintenance service werevampwigs.com
- Look Good, Feel Better lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk
- Wigs For Heroes wigsforheroes.org
- Afro Hair Guidance Cancer Hair Care cancerhaircare.co.uk/afro-hair
- Black Women Rising blackwomenrisinguk.org
- Future Dreams futuresdreams.org.uk
- Cancer Black Care cancerblackcare.org.uk
- Truefaithhb specialises in premium ready-to-wear wigs and hair extensions. Their custom pieces are specifically tailored for individuals experiencing hair loss from conditions such as alopecia, and hair loss due to chemotherapy truefaithhb.com
- Cancer Don't Let It Win cancerdontletitwincic.com

