

Accessing Support: Cognitive Changes

Cognitive changes can occur at any time throughout our lives, although may typically be associated with ageing. However, people who have cancer and treatment (particularly if you have received chemotherapy or immunotherapy) may notice changes to their concentration, memory, thinking and behaviour. Some of the time, these changes are temporary and resolve on their own, but other times they may last longer and you may feel that some extra support or information is needed.



Below is a list of organisations who may be able to offer you some support, as well as some resources that you may find helpful to read/listen to. The range and quality of services/support available from such organisations may vary. This list has been gathered as signposting only, and The Royal Marsden cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided by an organisation listed or the quality of their services.

If you have any questions or would like further advice/guidance about where to seek specialist help in your local area, you can speak with a member of your Royal Marsden treatment team or the Adult Psychological Support Service.

BreastCancer.org - Podcasts

[Chemo Brain Update: Cancer-Related Cognitive Decline](#)

This podcast explores the term 'Chemo Brain', explains cancer-related cognitive changes and decline, and what steps people can take to manage problems in thinking and memory.

Cognitive changes (chemo brain) – Macmillan

The Macmillan website outlines symptoms of cognitive changes, coping strategies and where you can reach out to for support.

Website link: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/impacts-of-cancer/chemo-brain#:~:text=During%20cancer%20treatment%2C%20you%20may,we%20first%20linked%20to%20chemotherapy>

'Emerging from the haze' – The Royal Marsden

This link will take you to a video explaining The Royal Marsden's 'Emerging from the Haze' Programme. The programme is held online and is 6 weeks in duration. It is run by occupational therapists at The Royal Marsden and aims to promote understanding of



cognitive changes and to provide tools and strategies to try to optimise cognition following cancer treatment.

Website link: <https://patientinfolibary.royalmarsden.nhs.uk/emerging-haze-programme>

The Brain Tumour Charity

"Memory difficulties and Brain Tumours"

An article which explains the relationship between brain tumours and the onset of various memory-based difficulties either due to the tumour's location or its treatment(s). Lists several coping strategies as well as a more detailed factsheet for those who are interested in learning more.

Website link: <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/living-with-a-brain-tumour/side-effects/memory-difficulties-and-brain-tumours/>

"Cognition and Brain Tumours"

An article which describes the types of cognitive changes one may witness as a result of a brain tumour, and links to a series of coping strategies that could be used to help manage them.

Website link: <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/living-with-a-brain-tumour/side-effects/cognition-and-brain-tumours/>

"Seizures, epilepsy, and brain tumours"

An article which explains what seizures are, what types exist, and how they relate to different types of brain tumours. Other information includes what current treatments are available for epilepsy, how to cope with seizures or help someone who is experiencing them, and what legal driving restrictions there are.

Website link: <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/living-with-a-brain-tumour/side-effects/epilepsy-seizures-and-brain-tumours/>

"Communication Difficulties and Brain Tumours"

An article which explains the relationship between brain tumours and certain types of communication difficulties, and presents a range of coping strategies for facing these difficulties.

Website link: <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/living-with-a-brain-tumour/side-effects/communication-difficulties/>

"Exercise and Cancer" – Maggie's

There is evidence that [exercise may lessen the effects of cognitive changes caused by chemotherapy](#). As such, it might be helpful for your recovery to engage in an appropriate level of exercise. You may wish to do this by yourself, but for those who prefer communal



activities Maggie's centres offer a range of exercise classes such as Nordic walking, gym sessions, and yoga – and their staff will happily discuss with you to ensure that the exercise is of an appropriate intensity.

Website link: <https://www.maggies.org/cancer-support/managing-practically/exercise-and-cancer/>

Tips for coping with cognitive changes – Cancer Research UK

Cancer Research UK outline potential treatments and coping strategies for cancer-related cognitive changes.

Website link: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/treatment/cancer-drugs/side-effects/chemo-brain/treatment-coping>

Other APSS Information and Resources

The Adult Psychological Support Service has a range of signposting information sheets on topics such as: coping at different stages of the cancer pathway, supporting your physical and emotional wellbeing, relationships, and information specific to certain types of cancer.

You can view the signposting information sheets on The Royal Marsden's [Patient Information Library](#) and the [Adult Psychological Support Service Website](#) (under 'Further information and resources'). You can also request a copy of these by emailing Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk or telephoning **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea) / **020 8661 3006** (Sutton).

Additional support services

Cancer Care Map

An online database of cancer support services. You can search by postcode or by particular themes e.g. cancer type.

Website link: <https://www.cancercaremap.org/>

Maggie's Cancer Centres

Cancer care centres with multiple locations, including The Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton and Charing Cross Hospital, West London. Workshops, groups, information and one-to-one counselling available.

Website link: <https://www.maggies.org/>

Phone number: **0300 123 1801**

NHS Talking Therapies

NHS website to help you find your local psychological talking therapies service based on your GP address. Your local NHS talking therapies service can be helpful if you would like psychological support for cancer when you are no longer regularly coming in for appointments at The Royal Marsden, as well as for concerns unrelated to cancer or that predated your cancer and have become worse due to it.



Website link:

[Find NHS talking therapies for anxiety and depression - NHS](#)

If you need any specialist and personalised advice about your cancer treatment, symptoms or side effects, please contact The Royal Marsden Hotline. This hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **020 8915 6899**.

The Royal Marsden's Adult Psychological Support Service offers short-term, cancer-specific psychological and psychiatric support. You can either self-refer or ask somebody in your Royal Marsden healthcare team to refer you. For more information, visit [Adult Psychological Support Service | The Royal Marsden](#). Alternatively, contact us directly on **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea), **020 8661 3006** (Sutton), or email Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk.



If you have ideas for other signposting or information sheets, or if you would like to be involved in working with APSS to improve the service we offer, please scan the QR code to see more about our patient and public involvement, or email Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk or telephone **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea) / **020 8661 3006** (Sutton) with your ideas.

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