

Accessing Support: Coping with Difficult Thoughts and Emotions

Cancer and its treatment can affect all areas of your life and can be an isolating or scary experience. It can lead us to feel many different thoughts and emotions including anxiety, fear, anger, and low mood. Navigating life with cancer can sometimes be overwhelming, and you may notice your mood changes more than you are used to. This is part of what many people go through when dealing with an illness, and there is no right or wrong way to feel. However, sometimes it is important to ask for additional support to help you cope with the thoughts and feelings you may be experiencing, and to help you understand that you are not alone.



Wherever you access or receive help, it is important to remember that, at times, our thoughts and feelings can make us think that life is not worth living. It is especially important that if you do feel this way, you seek help from your GP, your oncology team, your local mental health services - <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/urgent-support/>, talking helplines such as [Samaritans](#) and/ or emergency services (999, A&E).

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.



Macmillan – Depression Information and Support

Explores the symptoms of depression, coping with these symptoms, and how to get professional help. It also includes a specific section with guidance on what to do if you have experienced any thoughts of suicide.

Website link: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/impacts-of-cancer/depression>

Macmillan – Emotional Support Forum

Macmillan's forums, such as this emotional support forum, can be a way to share and receive support and advice with individuals who may be going through similar challenges to you.

Website link: https://community.macmillan.org.uk/cancer_experiences/emotional-support-forum

Macmillan – How Are You Feeling?

A booklet on the emotional effects of cancer which includes sections on: common thoughts and feelings, managing fear and anxiety, managing depression and sadness, getting help, feelings and physical symptoms, relationships and work, and acquiring financial support.

Website link:

<https://be.macmillan.org.uk/Downloads/CancerInformation/LivingWithAndAfterCancer/MAC11593E05NHHow-are-you-feelinglowresPDF20190301.pdf>

Moodzone NHS

This website explores several challenges to mental wellbeing that you might experience such as stress, anger, panic, anxiety, and low mood. It offers 10-minute audio guides for approaching these challenges, and includes posts of real stories from other people who have faced these problems.

Website link: <https://www.forumhealthcentre.nhs.uk/your-health/moodzone-stress-anxiety-and-depression>

My Possible Self App

This app is aimed at managing anxiety, depression, stress and sleep. It uses tips and exercises based on cognitive behavioural therapy, and is approved by the NHS.

Website link: <https://www.mypossibleself.com/>

NHS – Self-Help Booklet Library

An NHS library of self-help/information guides on a range of mental health conditions including anxiety, depression, and panic.

Website link: <https://web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp>



NHS Inform – Anxiety Self Help Guide

A general anxiety self-help guide for those with mild to moderate anxiety, based on CBT practices. The guide covers a wide range of topics including the symptoms and potential causes of anxiety, relaxation/grounding/ breathing techniques, tips on reducing avoidance, and activities which can help in recognising and correcting unhelpful anxious thoughts.

Website link: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health/mental-health-self-help-guides/anxiety-self-help-guide>

Qwell

An NHS-approved, free to access online mental health service. Qwell is completely anonymous – you create a username during sign up and no name or email address is required. On Qwell you can chat online to qualified professionals, use a community support function to talk to someone who has had similar experiences, or read through their self-guided mental health resources.

Website link: <https://www.qwell.io/>

The Royal Marsden – Stress Response & Grounding Techniques

A grounding self-help document explaining how the body reacts when stressed, and several grounding techniques for soothing it. Please contact The Royal Marsden Adult Psychological Support Service by emailing psychological.supportadmin@rmh.nhs.uk or by calling **020 8661 3006 / 020 7808 2777** if you would like this to be sent to you.

The Royal Marsden – Royal MILE Pre-habilitation Programme

The Royal MILE pre-habilitation programme is for people who have recently been diagnosed with cancer and are just starting treatment. It includes videos and worksheets aiming to support people with their psychological wellbeing and emotional resilience.

Website link: <https://patientinfolibrary.royalmarsden.nhs.uk/royal-mile-prehabilitation-programme>

Trekstock

This charity offers a support pack for individuals in their 20s and 30s who are affected by cancer, which includes a support booklet, a nutrition guide, a free 1-year subscription to the Headspace Meditation app, and invitation to join their Facebook support group. This group offers a place to ask difficult questions, seek support, and share advice privately.

Support pack and online community link: [Get Connected | Trekstock](#)



Unhelpful Thinking Habits

Sometimes the way in which we think about things can be unhelpful and might make it more difficult to manage difficult feelings. This website shows you some common unhelpful methods of thinking to help you identify when you might be doing this, and suggests some useful exercises for reducing these unhelpful thinking habits.

Website link: <https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/unhelpful.htm>

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: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-nhs-talking-therapies-service/find-your-gp>

If you need any specialist and personalised advice about your cancer treatment, symptoms or side effects, please contact The Royal Marsden Macmillan 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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