

Accessing Support: Talking to Adults About Your Cancer

Many people find talking about cancer with loved ones, friends, and colleagues after receiving a diagnosis to be an uncomfortable and even upsetting experience, and it may take you some time to feel able to talk to others about your cancer. It can seem overwhelming when considering discussing this with others, but it is important to think about who needs to know and the best way to talk to them about it. Talking to the people around you can help you get the support you need at home, at work, and from your healthcare team. Discussing cancer and its treatment with others can also help you to make decisions that are right for you.



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 – Talking about cancer

A collection of resources on talking about cancer including talking to people at work and discussing cancer in relationships. Also available through the link is Macmillan's 'Talking Cancer' podcast which features patients discussing aspects of life with cancer and may be helpful in hearing how others have navigated specific challenges and situations.

Website link: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/diagnosis/talking-about-cancer/talking-cancer-podcast>

Maggie's – Family and Friends Workshop

Maggie's centres offer a workshop for family and friends of those with cancer which covers practical aspects of supporting someone with cancer, and looking after oneself. This is also a space where loved ones of a person with cancer can share their feelings and concerns.

Website link: <https://www.maggies.org/cancer-support/our-support/courses-and-workshops/>



Maggie's – Personal Relationships

A resource exploring how cancer can impact various different personal relationships, and how you can manage these changes.

Website link: <https://www.maggies.org/cancer-support/managing-socially/personal-relationships-and-cancer/>

Maggie's – Talking to People

This website explores when difficult cancer conversations might need to take place, how to go about these and what the benefits of having these conversations are.

Website link: <https://www.maggies.org/cancer-support/managing-socially/talking-people/>

Trekstock - Friendship and Cancer

A course of videos aiming to support you in maintaining strong friendships and communicating about cancer with friends.

Website link: trekstock.com/resource/navigating-friendships-and-cancer

Bowel Cancer UK - Telling people about your diagnosis

Despite being geared around bowel cancer, much of the advice on this website would apply when discussing other diagnoses. There is advice on having discussions with children, parents, and partners.

Website link: <https://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/about-bowel-cancer/living-with-and-beyond-bowel-cancer/emotional-wellbeing/telling-people-about-your-diagnosis/>

Brain Tumour Charity - "7 ways that talking about your brain tumour can help"

A 7-point list compiled by a consultant clinical neuropsychologist explaining why speaking about one's brain tumour diagnosis with loved ones can be helpful for both parties.

Website link: <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/media-centre/news/support-news/why-talking-about-your-brain-tumour-helps/>

Brain Tumour Charity - "Telling your loved ones about your brain tumour diagnosis"

A short 9-point list of tips written by a clinical psychologist on how to approach the conversation of one's cancer diagnosis with their loved ones

Website link: <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/media-centre/news/support-news/telling-your-loved-ones-about-your-brain-tumour/>



Brain Tumour Charity - "Finding the Right Words"

6 practical tips for knowing what to say and what not to say to a loved one who has been diagnosed with a brain tumour.

Website link: <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/media-centre/news/blog-post/finding-right-words/>

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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