

# Difficulty making plans

When you are diagnosed with cancer you may feel as if you have little, or no, control over your life. Your time may be taken up with hospital appointments, coping with treatment or recovering from it. After treatment you may feel anxious, depressed or worried about the cancer coming back or progressing. These feelings may stop you from making short-term plans. There is support available to help you to cope with these feelings.

Knowing you can still make choices is an important part of your well-being. This involves making plans and having things you can look forward to. You can improve your confidence by starting with small plans and goals you would like to work towards.

For some people, treatment side effects may cause difficulty in concentrating, thinking clearly or with your memory. You might find it difficult to make plans. This is often called chemo brain. Other treatments such as hormonal therapy or radiotherapy to the brain may also cause these side effects. These symptoms are usually temporary and there are ways they can be managed. But they can affect with plans, including socialising or going back to work.

## Tips for making plans

- Keep it simple and focus on what you can plan for right now. Try making realistic, short-term plans, like meeting friends or going for a short walk. Build this up until it becomes part of your regular routine. Keep a note of your plan and what you have achieved so you can see your progress.
- Talk about how you are feeling with your family and friends. Tell them if you would like their help in making short-term and possibly longer-term plans. You could decide what you would like to do first and write down steps you can take to achieve them.
- If you feel anxious, depressed or worried about the future, talk to your cancer doctor or nurse. They can usually refer you to a counsellor or psychologist, who help you to find ways to cope with these feelings. A talking therapy called cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is used to treat anxiety, panic attacks or depression. It helps you to recognise negative thinking patterns and to change these.
- Look after yourself by eating healthily, getting enough rest and doing regular physical activity. You may feel more alert and less tired. This can have a positive effect on your emotional well-being and help you get on with life the way you want to.
- If you think you have difficulty with memory or concentration due to your cancer treatment tell your cancer doctor.
- To improve your confidence and help you plan successfully, you could make lists. You could use Post-it® reminder notes and put them where you can see them. You could use a calendar, a diary or put reminders on your mobile phone.
- Stress can affect your confidence and your memory. Try using some relaxation CDs or apps. Some hospitals or cancer support groups may offer relaxation sessions.

**Local resources:**

Resource	Contact details

**National resources:**

Resource	Contact details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety UK</li> <li>• British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)</li> <li>• Maggie's Centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk">www.anxietyuk.org.uk</a> Tel 0753 741 6905</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.bacp.co.uk">www.bacp.co.uk</a> Tel 0145 588 3300</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.maggiescentres.org">www.maggiescentres.org</a> Tel 0300 123 1801</li> </ul>

**Further information**

[macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/other-side-effects/chemo-brain.html](http://macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/other-side-effects/chemo-brain.html)

Our booklets and leaflets are available to order free on [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk)

- **How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer**
- **Worrying about cancer coming back**

**More information and 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](http://macmillan.org.uk)

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

We produce information in a range of formats and languages. To order these, visit [macmillan.org.uk/otherformats](http://macmillan.org.uk/otherformats) or call our support line.