

Thinking about the future

Having cancer can lead to positive life changes. Sometimes it can focus your mind on what is important to you. This can include spending more time with the people you care about, or making time for the things you have always wanted to do.

Going back to work or starting to do the things you did before are important steps forward. We have more information about [work and cancer](#).

Try not to ignore your emotions after cancer treatment. These feelings are a natural response to what has happened. Some people find life after cancer harder than when they were going through treatment. There are many things you can do to support your mental health when you are living with or after cancer, or you are recovering from treatment.

Everyone is different. There is no right way or right time to deal with what you have been through. There are things you can try, such as talking therapy, support groups and online chat forums. We have more information about [services in your area](#).

Tips for thinking about the future

- Doing something new can help distract and relax you. Some hobbies help you express your feelings – for example, playing a musical instrument or painting.
- You may decide to [be more active](#). You could start cycling, doing yoga or dancing, or join a walking group. You do not have to be good at these activities to enjoy them. Look out for any groups or classes in your area. Find something you enjoy and feel comfortable with.
- When you feel ready, you may decide to do some volunteer work. You could try to find something that matters to you or makes you feel part of your community.
- Think about your recovery as a set of small, achievable [goals](#) that you can work towards. For example, this could be doing some gentle exercise like going for a walk when you feel able. Or it could be trying to eat healthily most days.
- As you achieve a goal, your confidence will grow. You might also want to reward yourself for your hard work. Try not to be upset if you miss some of your goals. What is important is that you are trying.
- For some people, [work](#) is an important part of life. If you find work difficult to cope with, you may need to take time off until you feel better. It can help to talk with your employer about the best way to manage this.
- Going back to work after treatment can feel very different. Your priorities can change. You may want to consider working part time or returning to work slowly.

Macmillan Cancer Support resources

We have more information on our [website](#), including audiobooks. Or you can order our free booklets and leaflets on be.macmillan.org.uk such as:

- [How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer](#)
- [Worrying about cancer coming back](#)
- [Your feelings after cancer treatment](#)
- [Your feelings and cancer – easy read.](#)

We produce information in a [range of formats](#) and [languages](#). To order these, visit our website or call our support line.

Help to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE) is a course to help people after cancer treatment. It is a free 6-week self-management course that is run online. It was developed by Hope for the Community and Macmillan Cancer Support. To find out more, visit macmillan.org.uk/hope-programme

Further Macmillan 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 where you can [chat online](#) to one of our team.

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

Or if you want to share your experiences or ask questions, you can find others who understand on our [Online Community](#). Our free [Macmillan Buddy service](#) can arrange weekly calls or visits with a friendly volunteer who understands what you're going through.

Other useful contact details

- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy – call **0145 588 3300** or visit bacp.co.uk
- Mind – call **0300 123 3393** or visit mind.org.uk
- UK Council for Psychotherapy – call **020 7014 9955** or visit psychotherapy.org.uk

Notes and questions
