

Independence

This information is about feeling more independent. If you have cancer, it may mean you have to deal with things that frighten and challenge you.

Having cancer can make you feel less confident. You may feel you lost some of your independence during your treatment. Your role in your family or at work may have changed. These roles can be important to how you think about yourself.

Your social life may have changed during and after treatment too. You may not be in contact with your friends as much as you were before treatment.

You may worry about what you are able to do and cope with. Or you may feel less comfortable or confident doing things that you found easy before. Physical changes caused by treatment can also affect your confidence.

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. Or agree some reasonable adjustments. It can help to talk with your employer. You might also need help with extra costs. Or you might need financial support if you stop working.

Tips for feeling more independent

- Building your confidence takes time. You may find things improve as you [start to recover](#) from treatment. You may learn new ways of doing things for yourself again.
- Set yourself small goals that you know you can meet. For example, if your goal is a holiday, you could start with a day trip. It can be somewhere you know well and can travel to easily. You may only stay for a short time. The important thing to remember is that this is a step in the right direction.
- As you achieve small goals, your confidence will start to grow. Remember to notice every success, no matter how small it seems. You might want to celebrate or reward yourself somehow.
- During treatment and while you recover, you could ask friends or family [for practical help](#) and support. This could give you more time to rest or more energy. They may be able to help with household tasks, shopping and cooking. If you have children, you could ask someone you trust to take them to or from school or activities.
- You may require a [needs assessment](#). This is done by a healthcare professional. It looks at all the types of support you need for the cancer and any other issues it causes. Your healthcare team can arrange 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. Some people decide not to go back to work. Or they choose to do something different.
- Giving up work could affect [your finances](#). This might include your income, pension and any employee benefits. If early retirement is an option, discuss it with your employer. For some people, it could be an advantage. But for others, it can leave them financially worse off.
- It is important not to take on too much, too soon. Your cancer doctor, GP or specialist nurse can help you decide when and if you should go back to work.

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](#)
- [Talking about cancer](#)
- [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
- Mental Health Foundation – visit mentalhealth.org.uk
- Mind – call **0300 123 3393** or visit mind.org.uk

Notes and questions
