

# Anger or frustration

This information is about managing [anger or frustration](#). Having cancer means dealing with issues that may frighten and challenge you. Everyone reacts differently and there is no right or wrong way to feel.

It is natural to feel angry or frustrated when you have cancer. This sometimes hides other uncomfortable [emotions](#), such as fear or sadness.

You may feel angry or frustrated because:

- you are going through treatment and having to cope with side effects
- the cancer is affecting your [relationships](#), family life, [work](#) or social life
- it seems so unfair that you are ill.

We all show anger in different ways. Some people get impatient or shout. Others get upset and tearful. You may get angry with the people close to you. Anger or frustration can become a problem if they harm you or the people around you.

## Tips for managing anger or frustration

- Try not to hide your feelings. Tell people you are angry or frustrated with the situation and not with them.
- Look out for warning signs that you are getting angry. You may notice your heart is beating faster, you are breathing more quickly, your body is tense or you are clenching your fists.
- When you recognise that you are getting angry, count to 10, breathe deeply or walk away from the situation. This will give you time to calm down, think more clearly and decide how to react.
- If you cannot let go of your angry feelings, try hitting a pillow, screaming or having a cry. This will release tension and not harm anyone.
- [Talk about](#) what is making you angry or frustrated. A family member or friend could give you a different perspective on a situation. You can also call our [support line](#), or join our [Online Community](#) or a [support group](#). This will help you share your feelings.
- Keeping a diary or journal can help you express and release anger and frustration. Write down how you are feeling and what makes your mood better or worse.
- Finding ways to [help yourself relax](#) can reduce your stress and anger. Listen to soothing music, meditate or do muscle relaxation exercises. Work off your anger through regular [physical activity](#), such as walking, swimming or yoga.
- Try not to feel guilty about your angry thoughts. Anger can be a strong emotion, and you may find you can use it in a more positive way. It may help you focus on what is important in your life or start a new hobby.
- Look after yourself and avoid alcohol and recreational drugs. They can make it harder for you to control your temper. They can even lead to aggressive behaviour.
- If you are angry most of the time or your anger is starting to affect your life, talk to your GP. They can refer you to a counsellor or psychologist, or arrange for you to do an anger management course.

## 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](http://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.

## 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](http://macmillan.org.uk) where you can [chat online](#) to one of our team.

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.

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 phonecalls or videocalls with a friendly volunteer who understands what you're going through.

## Other useful contact details

- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) – visit [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)
- Help to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE) – a licensed programme developed by Coventry University and Macmillan Cancer Support to help people who have or have had cancer to get on with their lives – visit <https://learnzone.org.uk>
- Mental Health Foundation – visit [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)
- Mind – visit [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) or call **0300 123 3393**

## Notes and questions

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