First Steps – Health and Wellbeing: Managing Emotions

This leaflet provides information and advice on how to manage emotions before, during and after treatment. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the cancer team secretary who will direct your enquiry to the relevant member of the cancer team: 01484 343490.

The aim of this leaflet is to suggest strategies that are designed to help you to take care of and manage the impact a cancer diagnosis and treatment can have on your emotional wellbeing. This leaflet also signposts you to further resources and organisations that may help.

How you may be feeling is understandable and we want to reassure you of this. You may find you need to pay some more attention to taking care of your emotional wellbeing at this time. Should you find you would benefit from some ideas to try out something new or something you may done before but have stopped doing; we have included five suggestions below.

You might like to create your own 'emotional wellbeing plan' to look after this aspect of you as go through your cancer journey. You can do this in collaboration with a clinician involved in your care if this would be helpful.

Five suggestions that you may find helpful to take care of your emotional wellbeing:

1. Breathing exercises

How we feel (such as stress and anxiety) can have an impact on the body. We can feel muscle tension and joint pain, increased heart rate and headaches. Some simple forms of breathing methods can help to relax the body and in turn the mind. This is because when you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. For example, breathing in for 4 seconds and out for 6 seconds, with the aim of slowing down your breathing by taking longer, deeper breathes.

2. Nourishing/depleting activities

At times of higher stress, how you spend your time may be dominated by appointments and recovery from treatment side effects. It can help to notice how you are spending your time outside of this and whether you are doing more depleting activities rather than things you find nourishing and rewarding. We suggest you could make a list of those things in your life that you enjoy doing, things which nourish and enrich you, and a list of things that deplete you. Try to add an extra nourishing activity into your day and reduce the depleting things you do.

3. Goals, expectations and pacing yourself

Particularly during and after treatment, you may find that you need to be more flexible and kinder with the goals and expectations you set for yourself. It can help to break down your goals into achievable steps based on what you feel able to do at the time, such as instead of going for the 10 mile walk you may have previously done, go for a 15 minute walk. Pacing yourself and ensuring there is time to rest and to find balance with how you spend your time can be really helpful to review and adjust. Sometimes this may need to involve you being kind to yourself, such as to say ‘’it’s okay I need more time to rest now” or “I need others to help me to do the things I normally could do on my own”. It can help to ask yourself “what would a compassionate friend say to me right now?”.

4. Talking to others

Talking about your experiences can be an important and helpful part of managing your emotions for some people. This might include talking to family members and friends, professionals and volunteers outside your family or meeting other patients for peer support. Many people say they wish they had talked to people sooner, rather than letting their emotions build up.

5. Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the quality of being present and fully engaged with whatever we are doing at the moment — free from distraction or judgment, and aware of our thoughts and feelings without getting caught up in them. Mindfulness meditation can teach our mind in this moment-to-moment awareness and help us to build this skill so that we can apply it to everyday life. This can be helpful when faced with challenging circumstances or difficult situations. We have suggested some mindfulness resources below that you might like to try. Even simply finding something to help focus you on the present moment, such as sitting outside and taking in the nature you can see or focusing your attention on something like doing part of a puzzle can be part of being more mindful. We know that this can reduce anxiety and stress. Let us know if you would like more information on this.

People and Services to Support Your Emotions

Macmillan Information Service – provides a listening ear and emotional support for patients and carers/family members.
Calderdale Royal Hospital 01422 222709 or Huddersfield Royal Infirmary 01484 343614.

CNS support – your clinical nurse specialist is trained to provide emotional support.

Support groups through the Macmillan Information Service providing peer support through the Macmillan Coffee Time/Singing Group/Walking Groups.

Other local and regional support groups provide key peer support. e.g. bowel/blood cancer/upper GI support groups.

Cancer Psychology Service

If you do notice difficulties, especially if it affects your ability to carry out normal activities - you may want to consider a referral for talking therapies. The cancer psychology service offers short or longer term psychological support according to what you may need. If you are unsure, speak to a staff member, they can advise and refer if they think this service would be helpful for you.

Useful sources of information

https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/treatment/coping-with-treatment/cancer-and-your-emotions

Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust

Cancer Team Secretary
Monday to Friday 8am – 4pm 01484 343490

Tips to improve your mental wellbeing from NHS – every Mind matters
https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/

The website MIND has lots of useful information about coping with staying at home and looking after your mental health during the coronavirus.
https://www.mind.org.uk/

You can also download some apps and read books which help with relaxation, breathing, meditation etc. Some of these are free and some have a cost:

http://franticworld.com/

www.calm.com

www.headspace.com/

www.bighealth.com/

Kirklees Wellness Service

QR Code

NHS Scotland

QR Code

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).
0800 013 0018 (PALS) patientadvice@cht.nhs.uk

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Calderdale Royal Hospital
Macmillan Unit
01422 222668

Huddersfield Royal Infirmary
Greenlea Suite Ward 7
01484 342474

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym fomacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪਾਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉੱਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
براہِ مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"