

40. Loss of interest

Having cancer can make you feel vulnerable. Your life may have worked around hospital visits and getting support from hospital staff, friends or family members. After treatment ends, it can seem as though you've become dependent on others.

This may make you feel like you have no control over your life.

Cancer and its treatments can change a person's role in their family or at work. Many people feel that these roles are an important part of their identity and if they change, it can affect their confidence.

Your social life often has to change after treatment. This can affect your confidence as you may not have the contact you once had with friends or colleagues. You can still feel tired and stressed after all you've been through, and the social things you used to do may be much more difficult.

It can take time for your strength to return. Some people have a loss of concentration too. This is sometimes called 'chemo brain'. Things you used to find easy may now be much more difficult, like reading a book or making small decisions. This can make you lose confidence in your abilities.

Getting back into these activities will take time. You'll probably build up your strength and confidence gradually. Setting yourself manageable goals can help. As you achieve these, your confidence will grow. Doing little things to reward yourself can help. This could be a trip to the cinema or doing something you enjoyed before you had cancer.

How can I manage this?

- Assess your life. You may want to ask yourself: Am I doing what fulfils me? Am I doing what I've always wanted to do? What is important to me?
- Focus on each day and expect both good and bad days.
- Do things at your own pace. Avoid pressure to make decisions or start new activities straight away.
- Plan rest time between activities.
- If you feel apprehensive about going out for the first time, ask someone you love and trust to come along.
- Share your feelings and worries with family and friends.
- Practice some form of relaxation, such as meditation, visualisation, yoga or deep breathing.
- Keep a journal. Many people find it helps to write down how they're feeling.
- Join a support group. Speaking with other cancer survivors may help you cope and make you feel more optimistic about the future.

Living With and Beyond Cancer Information Sheet

40. Loss of Interest - Resources/Information

Local Resources:

<p>Cancer Care Counselling Service The Fern Centre North Devon District Hospital Raleigh park Barnstaple Devon EX32 4JB</p>	<p>Jess French, Lead Macmillan Cancer Care Counsellor Tel: 01271 334472 (ext. 5672) Email: jess.french@nhs.net Web: https://overandabove.org.uk/fern-centre/ Self referral or though your CNS or keyworker</p>
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National Resources:

<p>NHS 111</p>	<p>Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.</p>
<p>NHS Website</p>	<p>Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>Samaritans 2 Summerland Street Barnstaple EX32 8JJ Helpline : 0330 094 5717 for North Devon /North Cornwall National Helpline:116 123</p>	<p>Life can be tough, whatever you are going through they are there to help. They offer confidential support and all calls are free for national helpline but local charges apply Hours: 7 days a week 9.00am-9.00pm</p>
<p>Macmillan Cancer Support Line www.macmillan.org.uk Call 0808 808 00 00 — Monday – Friday 9am—8pm</p>	<p>Calls are free of charge from all consumer landlines and mobile phones plus all mobile networks. Please note that calls to this number are not free when made from outside the UK. If you are calling from outside of the UK call on +44 207 091 2230</p>
<p>Macmillan on-line Community</p>	<p>Online support— to share experiences or vent your emotions find others who understand—join today!</p>
<p>Marie Curie Support Line — Living with a terminal illness and looking for support www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/marie-curie-support</p>	<p>Calls are free of charge from all consumer landlines and mobile phones plus all mobile networks. The Support Line is open 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday and 11am – 5pm Saturday</p>

Other Resources :

<p>Macmillan Booklets:</p>	<p>Managing the symptoms of cancer MAC11671</p>
	<p>How are you feeling? PDF— MAC11593_E05_N</p>
	<p>Understanding chemotherapy MAC11619_E15</p>
	<p>Understanding radiotherapy PDF— MAC11640_E12_N</p>