

47. Not being at peace with or feeling regret about the past

A diagnosis of cancer can sometimes bring up feelings from the past, or regrets about things that have or have not happened or been said. Understanding that such feelings are natural and that it is normal to feel certain emotions can be helpful to those feeling this way. Few human beings can look back over their lives without thinking of something about which they feel regret. Because we are not gods we make mistakes. Developing compassion and acceptance towards ourselves can be hard but is something worth working towards.

How can I manage these feelings?

The first step is to fully acknowledge the feelings you are having. Sometimes people try to dismiss these feelings, fight them or become caught up in them. So rather than be brought low by these feelings try to work towards accepting that many people do feel regret about aspects of their lives. Once you have been able to acknowledge your feelings, you can think about making a wise response in relation to them.

Sometimes just talking through these feelings can be very powerful. However, some issues may feel too sensitive to discuss with family or close friends if they themselves are involved in some way, or if it makes you feel too ashamed. Even so, it can sometimes bring enormous relief if we are able to say sorry or express regret to those we fear we have hurt in the past. We cannot control other people's reactions to our words (e.g. they may not forgive us) but sometimes we simply need to say things to get them off our chest.

You might find it helpful to discuss your feelings with a counsellor. They may be able to help you become clearer about what you feel and what you would like to do, if anything. Several counselling services are available offering free, confidential sessions, to anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis. You do not always need a doctor's referral. See local and national resources below.

If there is a spiritual element to how you feel, you might find it helpful to talk through your concerns with a spiritual leader (vicar, rabbi, imam etc) from that faith. Sometimes simply putting these concerns into words can make a huge difference. Most hospitals will have a chaplain who can offer spiritual care, whatever your faith or spiritual tradition, including if you do not have any particular affiliation.

Not being at peace or feeling regret from the past can sometimes be associated with other areas of distress resulting from cancer treatment such as:

- Sadness or depression
- Anger or frustration
- Worry, fear or anxiety.
- Relationships with your partner, children, family or friends.
- Loss of meaning or purpose in life
- Loss of faith or spiritual concern
- Guilt

Living With and Beyond Cancer Information Sheet

47. Not being at peace with the past - Resources/Information

Local Resources:

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| <p>Cancer Care Counselling Service The Fern Centre North Devon District Hospital Raleigh Park Barnstaple</p> | <p>Jess French, Lead Macmillan Cancer Care Counsellor Tel: 01271 334472 (ext. 5672) Email: ndht.cancercarecounselling@nhs.net Web: https://overandabove.org.uk/fern-centre/</p> |
| <p>Hospital Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Chapel, Level 1 NDDH There is also a small courtyard garden that can be accessed via the chapel. There is a prayer room for groups. Volunteers visit each ward including Seamoor Unit, during the week and chaplains are available from 8.00-4.00pm and on Sunday mornings.</p> | <p>Whether a patient, or relative, the chaplaincy team are here to support you. They focus on the wellbeing of the whole person and seek to engage with people of all faiths or none, respecting your uniqueness, integrity and confidentiality. Please ask the ward staff if you would like to see a chaplain or a chaplaincy visitor, or you can let them know by telephoning 01271 322362 and leaving a message for the team.</p> |
| <p>Talkworks 109 Boutport Street Call: 0300 555 3344 Or visit www.talkworks.dpt.nhs.uk for online form</p> | <p>Are you struggling to cope, feeling low, anxious or overwhelmed by your thoughts or feelings? Are you living with a health condition that is making you tired, worried and frustrated?</p> |

National Resources:

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| <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 & wellbeing.</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 :

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| <p>Macmillan Booklets:</p> | <p>Cancer and relationships— MAC17643_E01_N</p> |
| | <p>How are you feeling? PDF— MAC11593_E05_N</p> |
| | <p>Talking about Cancer</p> |
| | <p>Worrying about cancer coming back— MAC14215_E03_N</p> |