NHS
Royal Devon
University Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Taking control after a cancer diagnosis – six things you can talk about

Other formats

If you need this leaflet in another format such as Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service:

- 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services)
- 01271 314090 (for North Devon services)
- rduh.pals@nhs.net

Introduction

When you first hear that you have cancer, everything can seem overwhelming. It's good to remind yourself that everyone is different, and some people find it easier to talk than others, while some people don't know how to start, what to talk about or who to talk to. It helps to know how to get further information to get the care and support best suited for you.

In this leaflet are six things you, your family and friends can feel comfortable to talk to us about.

It's really important to get to know your Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) and Cancer Support Worker (CSW). They are your main point of contact, sometimes called a keyworker, and are able to support you with a variety of questions and concerns. This is an important part of your cancer care.

As well as useful names and telephone numbers, we've included some space for 'personal notes' for you to write down important parts of a conversation to use as a reminder when you get home.

The name of my CNS/CSW (keyworker) is: …….....

Their contact details are: …….....

Please keep their contact details safe.

Your notes

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1. Help and support

Why?

Accepting and building support around you makes you feel more in control. If you are struggling to have conversation or feeling isolated then share how you feel.

How?

Talk to your CNS/CSW or contact FORCE, our local cancer support and information centre, who offer counselling and support. These services are free and available for up to two years following your diagnosis. Macmillan and other national charities also offer support – ask your team for more details.

Your notes

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2. Let's talk Sex

Why?

Treatments can impact on sex and intimacy in the following ways: fatigue, reduced libido, changes in sensation, altered body image or worrying about fertility. It may take some time to get used to how your body is after treatment and how it responds. It can be helpful to open up sensitive conversation early.

How?

Talk to your CNS/CSW who may be able to help or refer you onto a psychosexual counsellor, sexual health clinic advisor or physiotherapist.

Your notes

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3. Money worries

Why?

Not being able to work, travel expenses and prescriptions can be a worry and have an impact on your day-to-day living. There are a range of financial offers available to you to access. Please note, some are means tested.

How?

Talk to your CNS/CSW or contact FORCE, for benefits advice and grants. The Macmillan website also has useful resources about money worries and opening up conversations with employers in the workplace.

Your notes

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4. Being active

Why?

Moderate exercise helps you manage the side effects of treatment, cancer related fatigue and improves your mood. It may also help prevent cancer reoccurrence. We have a range of services for you to access both before and after your treatment.

How?

Talk to your CNS/CSW for advice and about our specialist physiotherapists and exercise therapist who offer information and guidance, 1:1 support and group activities within the hospital setting and in your community.

Your notes

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5. Eating well

Why?

Eating a varied diet supports you through treatment, helps wound healing, maintains energy levels and manages a healthy weight.

How?

Talk to your CNS/CSW for advice and about our specialist dieticians who offer information and guidance, 1:1 support and group activities to help you.

Your notes

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6. Stop smoking

Why?

It helps you maintain your health during and after your cancer treatment. It can also help you tolerate treatments more readily and make some treatments more effective.

How?

Talk to CNS/CSW about our supportive stopping smoking service.

Your notes

Help available

Our **CNSs and CSWs** are all skilled communicators and receive additional training to support you. They will have an in-depth knowledge of your specific cancer, its treatments, and side effects. We also have a specialist physiotherapist and dietitian who can support you with a range of groups and 1:1 service.

Exeter Leukaemia Fund (ELF)

ELF offers free face-to-face and phone support to blood cancer patients and their families, offering services such as counselling, complementary therapies, transport services, information and advice, and support with legal services. We are based on the haematology unit at the Royal Devon's Wonford site and have a suite of accommodation rooms available. Please feel free to drop in to access information and support or have a chat with one of our volunteers.

ELF
Phone no: 01392 493344

FORCE

FORCE offers free face-to-face, phone, and online support to cancer patients and their families, offering services such as counselling, complementary therapies, support groups, financial and benefits advice, exercise advice, and an information helpline with a team of nurses and advisors. We are based at the Royal Devon's Wonford site and have outreach

hubs at Okehampton, Tiverton, and Ottery St. Mary. Please feel free to drop in to access information or have a chat with one of our volunteers.

FORCE Support and Information Centre
Information and advice: 01392 406151
Psychological and emotional support: 01392 406168 / 406169

Fern Centre

The Fern Centre offers free face-to-face and phone support to cancer patients and their families, offering services such as counselling, complementary therapies, support groups, and financial and benefits advice. We are based at the Royal Devon's NDDH site and have outreach hubs at Holsworthy and Ilfracombe. We also have three en suite accommodation rooms available to relatives of patients being cared for in the hospital. Please feel free to drop in to access information or have a chat with one of our volunteers

Fern Centre
Phone no: 01271 311 855

Macmillan

Macmillan offers online and phone-based information and support, and a chance to share and learn from others in its online community. They also host a range of patient information booklets on the topics in this patient leaflet, which you are able order or view at your local cancer centre.

Macmillan cancer support
Phone no: 0808 808 00 00

If you want to know more about other organisations who may be able to support you, for example LGBTQI+, disabilities, or charities specific to your cancer, talk to your CNS or CSW.

Your notes

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern, please contact PALS:

- 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services)
- 01271 314090 (for North Devon services)
- rduh.pals@nhs.net

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

You can also share your feedback on the Care Opinion website at www.careopinion.org.uk or freephone 0800 122 3135.

Scan the QR code to visit the Care Opinion website →

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
www.royaldevon.nhs.uk

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