

40. Loss of Interest / Activities

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.

Local Resources:

Resource	Contact Details
<p>Livewell South West: Mindfulness Mindfulness practice can help you develop the ability to deal with life's pressures. Mindfulness meditation is a skill you can develop and a form of self-awareness training that helps you get to know yourself more fully, think more clearly and in the present moment.</p> <p>Managing Anxiety This one hour workshop provides information on the psychological and physical symptoms of anxiety and strategies to manage this including breathing, goal setting and cognitive behaviour therapy</p> <p>Managing Low Mood This one hour workshop provides information on the psychological symptoms of low mood as well as providing strategies to manage this</p> <p>Managing Stress This one hour workshop introduces the symptoms of stress and how the body responds, and provides simple strategies to manage this</p>	<p>Livewell South West: To book a place on any of the 1 hour workshops please call: Tel: 01752 435419 or Email: plymouthoptions@nhs.net</p>
<p>Mustard Tree Cancer Support & Triangle Drop In Centres Ask questions, share concerns, offers a range of services including benefits advice. Support, advice and information for cancer patients and their carers</p>	<p>Mustard Tree, Derriford Hospital: Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm 01752 430060/01752 431468 Kingsbridge: Tuesdays 10am to 4pm 01548 852349 Liskeard: Thursdays 10am to 4pm 01579 373500 Tavistock: Fridays 10am to 4pm 01822 615935</p>
<p>Other Resources</p>	<p>Your GP, Oncology Doctor, Specialist Nurse, District Nurse, Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist.</p>

National Resources:

Resource	Contact Details
<p>Macmillan Cancer Support Provide comprehensive advice and information on all aspects of cancer.</p>	<p>www.macmillan.org.uk 0808 808 0000 (Mon-Fri, 9am-8pm)</p>

Further Information:

<p>Macmillan Cancer Support booklets: – available free from the Mustard Tree Cancer Support Centre</p>	<p>BHOC Information and Support Centre</p>
<p>Your feelings after cancer treatment</p>	<p><i>Managing the Stress of Cancer</i></p>
<p>How are you feeling?</p>	
<p>Life After Cancer Treatment</p>	
<p>How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer</p>	