

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

There are sections on each of these issues elsewhere in this directory.

Local Resources:

Resource	Contact Details
<p>Livewell South West: Panic This workshop aims to break down some of the myths surrounding panic and help you to manage your panic attacks.</p> <p>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>Sleep Feel, Feel Well Introduces ways to support restful sleep</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 Macmillan Centre Provides a free counselling service to patients, their family and carers</p>	<p>Mustard Tree Macmillan Support Centre at Derriford Hospital. Counselling also available at the Outreach Centres (Kingsbridge, Liskeard & Tavistock). For more information, please call 01752 430060</p>
<p>Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care Chaplain service is available to offer support when feelings of uncertainty and worry are uppermost</p>	<p>Pastoral Care Team: 01752 792313 Mustard Tree staff</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 booklets: – Available free from the Mustard Tree Macmillan Centre</p>
<p>Talking about your cancer</p>
<p>How are you feeling?</p>