

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

TAKING CHARGE

A guide to self-management
Helping you get more out of life

Welcome

Today's Health and Wellbeing Clinic has been set up to help people affected by cancer lead a full and active life after their diagnosis. You'll find out what information and support is available so you can take greater control of your life and look after yourself more effectively. We often call this self-management.

It's worth mentioning early on, though, that self-management doesn't mean going it alone. You should involve family, friends, health professionals and even people you meet today. They can help you work out how best to overcome any problems you face and achieve the goals you set yourself.

Enjoy the day,



Angela Cleary
Learning and Development Manager – People Affected By Cancer
Macmillan Cancer Support

PS Jot down below anything you want to discuss today, then talk to one of our volunteers. They'll point you in the right direction.

What's inside?

Five top tips for ...

Getting the most from your support network	3
Getting the information you need	4
Planning, prioritising and pacing	7
Being good to yourself	8
Monitoring yourself	11

What can you do for yourself?

Look after your body	14
Take care of your feelings	16
Make the most of your relationships	18
Adapt to life beyond cancer	20
Money, money, money	22

How to create a plan of action

25



'Talking to my sister has helped me come to terms with my cancer and made me feel positive about the future. I haven't felt so close to her since we were kids.'

Les, Burnham

5 top tips for ... getting the most from your support network

Having people around who understand you and your needs is an important part of self-management. But you must ensure you make the best possible use of them.

- 1** Make your thoughts and feelings clear. When speaking to a member of your support network, such as your partner, friend or doctor, focus on how you feel. That means starting sentences with 'I', not 'you'. Try saying, for example, 'I feel sad when we argue,' rather than, 'You always get wound up with me.' It'll mean you can sort out any tricky situations much more easily.
- 2** Before meeting with a health or social care professional, such as your consultant, write down any questions or issues that you'd like their help with.
- 3** If you don't understand something, ask for it to be explained more clearly. This is particularly important when talking to professionals. You have the right to know what's happening to you.
- 4** Whenever you meet with a professional, write down what they advise you to do until they next see you.
- 5** Expand your support network. Think about meeting or speaking to other people who've had a similar experience to you. Today is a great opportunity to do that or find out about cancer support groups in your local area. You can also join Macmillan's online community at [macmillan.org.uk](https://www.macmillan.org.uk)

5 top tips for ...

getting the information you need

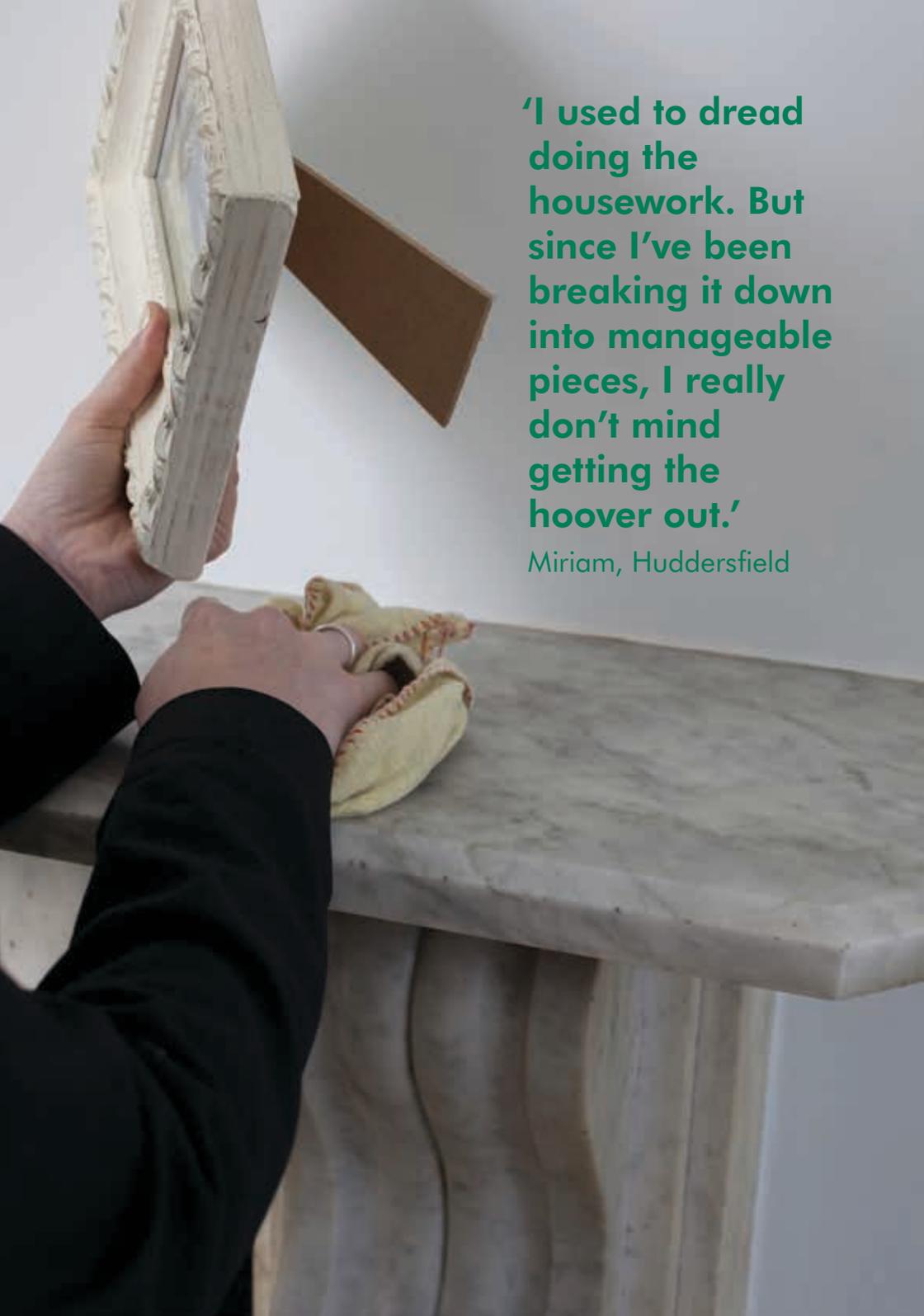
Getting hold of information you can trust can help you feel more in control of your life. Today's clinic is an excellent place to do this. But you'll also need to look elsewhere to get all the information that's right for you and your situation.

- 1** Make use of reliable sources of information you can easily access. These may include your family and friends, professionals at your treatment centre, local information and support centres, your GP practice or other people living with cancer.
- 2** Read the 'Useful information' section at the back of this booklet. It lists websites that offer high-quality and reliable information.
- 3** When you read information, especially on the internet, consider who has produced it. For quality information, try to use websites that have been accredited by The Information Standard scheme. See theinformationstandard.org
- 4** Order free information from be.macmillan.org.uk Macmillan produces booklets, CDs and audio tapes on cancer types and treatments, as well as information on the practical, emotional and financial impact of living with cancer.
- 5** Call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**. It's free from landlines and mobile phones and open Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm. You can ask medical questions, get information about benefits or simply have a chat.



'My GP gave me a Macmillan booklet on life after cancer treatment. It felt like it had been written especially for me.'

John, Leeds



'I used to dread doing the housework. But since I've been breaking it down into manageable pieces, I really don't mind getting the Hoover out.'

Miriam, Huddersfield

5 top tips for ... planning, prioritising and pacing

Doing some of the activities you used to do regularly can be hard after a cancer diagnosis. Ongoing problems can also make everyday tasks such as household chores quite frustrating. The key is to have clear goals and then use the three Ps below to reach them.

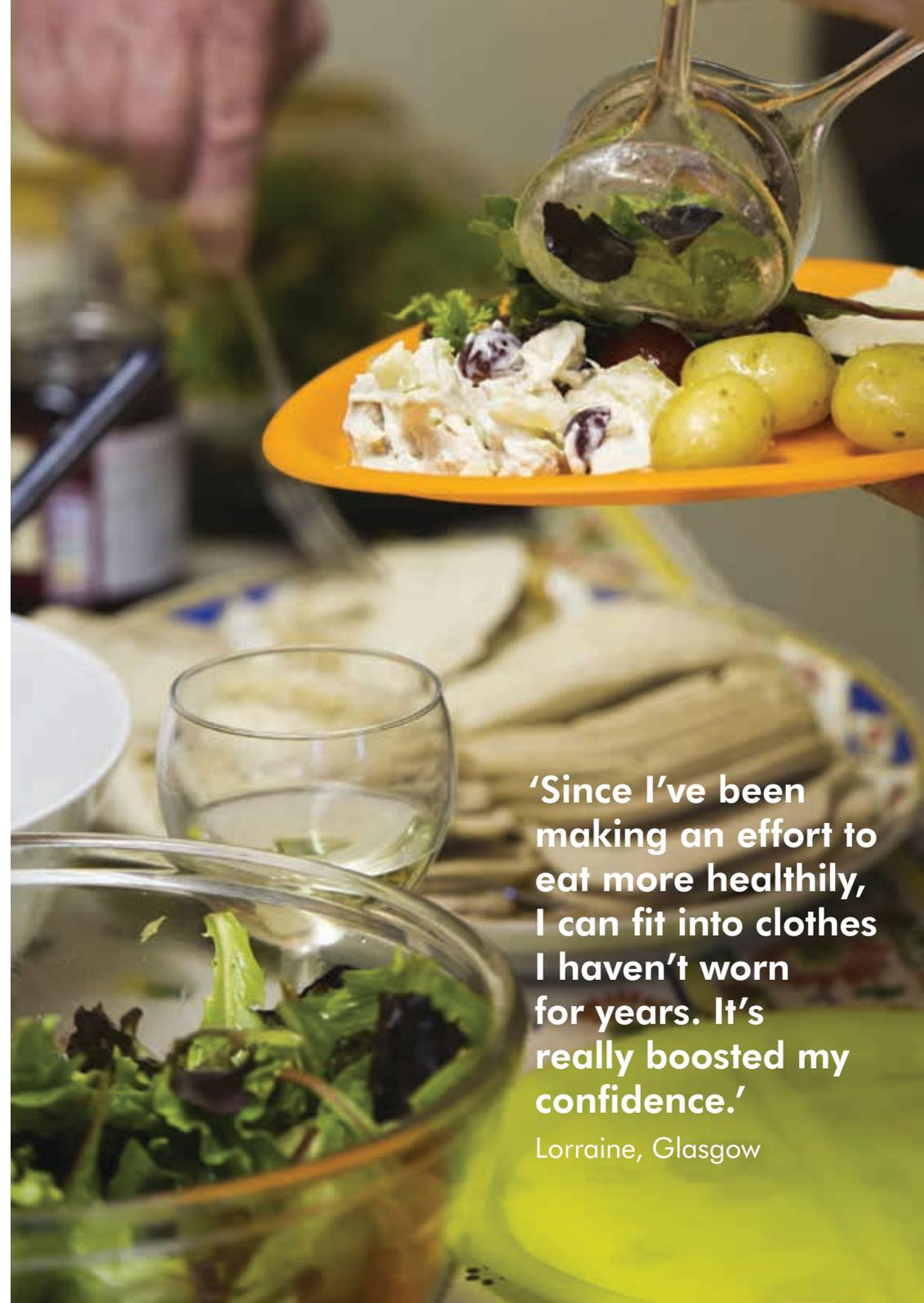
- 1 Planning** – look at the activities you'd like to complete over a week and plan how you'll get them done. This way you'll avoid doing too much on one day and not being able to do anything the next.
- 2** Use a diary or planner to help plan your activities.
- 3 Prioritising** – make a list of your activities and decide which need to be completed first. Which do you need to do yourself? Is there anyone who could do them for you?.
- 4 Pacing** – try to break tasks down into more manageable chunks and avoid tackling everything all at once. Pace yourself by taking short breaks and try to keep changing the way you tackle a task, so do the ironing sitting down as well as standing up.
- 5** Don't spend too much time doing the same activity as this makes it more likely you'll overdo things. Why not use a timer or alarm so you don't lose track of time and tire yourself out?

5 top tips for ...

being good to yourself

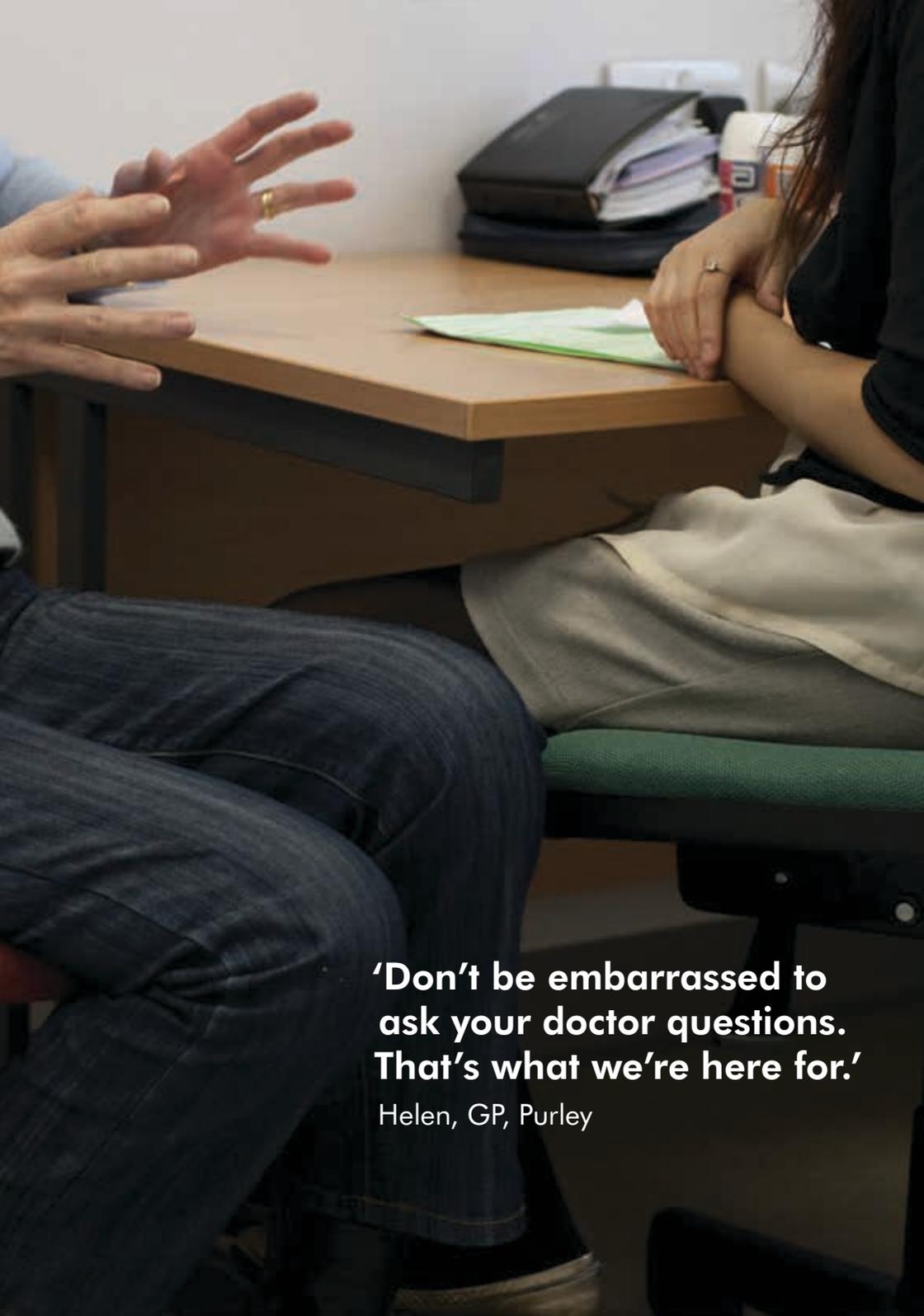
Having cancer can be an overwhelming experience and lead to changes that make life seem completely different. If you've finished treatment, or are still undergoing it, it's important to take care of yourself and feel proud of what you've overcome so far.

- 1** Eat a healthy diet with some treats – order Macmillan's *Eating well after cancer treatment* booklet from be.macmillan.org.uk or call us free on **0808 808 00 00**.
- 2** Take part in some regular exercise – if you've not done any for a while, start slowly and build up at your own pace until you reach the recommended level of 30 minutes a day, at least five times a week. Order your free *Get Active Feel Good* pack at be.macmillan.org.uk
- 3** Get into a sleep routine. Aim to go to bed at a regular time and develop a routine to prepare your body for sleep.
- 4** Have some 'me' time to relax – this could involve reading, gardening or simply doing nothing.
- 5** Savour the good things in your life – many people use their experience of cancer to re-evaluate what's important to them. So cherish what makes you smile. It could be the love of those around you, a sunny day or a funny joke.



'Since I've been making an effort to eat more healthily, I can fit into clothes I haven't worn for years. It's really boosted my confidence.'

Lorraine, Glasgow



'Don't be embarrassed to ask your doctor questions. That's what we're here for.'

Helen, GP, Purley

5 top tips for ...

monitoring yourself

Developing a better understanding of your health is a vital part of taking greater control of your life. To do this, it's important to record when you're feeling good and bad and to keep asking health professionals about things that affect your health, no matter how small.

- 1** Understand your medication – make sure you know what you're taking and why, as well as any side effects you should be looking out for.
- 2** Keep a symptoms diary – note down any symptoms or side effects that are bothering you. And record how you feel, even when you're symptom-free. This will help you and your health professionals have a better understanding of any problems you're facing.
- 3** Serious side effects and symptoms – ask your oncologist about any side effects and symptoms that would warrant a phone call to a doctor or a trip to the hospital. Record these in a place that's easy to find, such as your symptoms diary. Don't be afraid to call or go to the hospital if you experience any of these symptoms.
- 4** Ask away – you're the expert on how you're feeling, so if you have any questions, keep asking your health professional until you get the answers you need. And if you still want more information, you can always call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** (Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm).
- 5** Know who to contact outside the hours of 9am to 5pm in case you need to speak to someone urgently.

GETTING BACK IN THE DRIVING SEAT

What can you do for yourself?

When you've had a cancer diagnosis, everything changes. You're emotionally drained. You're physically exhausted. Your relationships may have suffered as a result of your illness. And that's not to mention your money worries.

But remember we can help you to help yourself. From advising you on finances to creating an action plan, Macmillan's volunteers can give you the support you need to get back in the driving seat again. After all, that's what we're here for.





KEEP ACTIVE

Look after your body

Cancer and treatment can have many effects on your body that make it difficult to keep healthy. Today's a chance to find out what you can do to be fitter and more active.

Is this section relevant to you? If so, you should answer the first question now and the others during or at the end of today's clinic. Order your free *Get Active Feel Good* pack at be.macmillan.org.uk

Do you have any concerns about becoming more active?

If so, what are they? (For example, I feel tired a lot, I often feel weak, I get out of breath easily.)

What did you hear today that might help you overcome these problems?

What can you do next?

Is there anyone else you need to speak to for more support or information?



Don't bottle it up

Take care of your feelings

Cancer can have an even greater impact on how you think and feel than it does on your body. So it's important to get the support you need to deal emotionally and psychologically with your cancer experience. Start today by finding out where you can get help or call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**

Is this section relevant to you? If so, you should answer the first question now and the others during or at the end of today's clinic.

Do you have any concerns about how you've felt since your diagnosis and treatment? If so, what are they? (For example, I feel angry, I feel sad, I feel anxious about the future.)

What did you hear today that might help you overcome these feelings?

What can you do next?

Is there anyone else you need to speak to for more support or information?



Keep talking

Make the most of your relationships

You may have found that your experience of cancer has affected your relationships with your family, friends or work colleagues. There's plenty of support to help you talk openly about these changes and tackle any problems. Find out what's available today.

Is this section relevant to you? If so, you should answer the first question now and the others during or at the end of today's clinic.

Do you have any concerns about relationships which have been affected by your cancer experience? If so, what are they? (For example, I lose my temper easily with my partner, I'm unable to tell my manager I'm feeling unwell or tired, I can't open up to my children).

What did you hear today that might help you overcome these concerns?

What can you do next?

Is there anyone else you need to speak to for further support or information?



Need a hand?

Adapt to life beyond cancer

Having cancer may mean you now need extra help to undertake everyday activities. Today you can find out about accessing different types of practical support to help you tackle these activities and lead as full a life as possible.

Is this section relevant to you? If so, you should answer the first question now and the others during or at the end of today's clinic.

Do you have any ongoing practical issues you'd like to discuss? If so, what are they? (For example, I struggle to do the shopping, I can't bend down too long to do the gardening, I find cleaning my home very tiring.

What did you hear today that might help you overcome these concerns?

What can you do next?

Is there anyone else you need to speak to for further support or information?



Money, money, money

Cancer can be an expensive illness. As well as creating additional costs, it also often leads to your income dropping. If you have money worries because of your cancer experience, use today to find out about the financial support available to you.

Is this section relevant to you? If so, you should answer the first question now and the others during or at the end of today's clinic. For further help and advice visit macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport

Do you have any financial issues you'd like to discuss?

If so, what are they? (For example, I want to find out about the benefits I may be entitled to.)

What did you hear today that might help you overcome these concerns?

What can you do next?

Is there anyone else you need to speak to for further support or information?



WE HAVE A PLAN

How to create a plan of action

Hopefully you'll gather lots of helpful information from today's Health and Wellbeing Clinic to help you take greater control of your life. There may be lots of advice you want to act on straight away, but it's important not to do too much too soon. By focusing on just one thing, you're more likely to get the result you want.

To help you take the first steps towards getting more out of life, we suggest you create a plan of action. It'll help you think clearly about what you want to achieve and how to do it.

The things you need to consider when creating a plan of action are:

What do I want to achieve?

This may be your overall big goal (for example, I want to sleep better) or something more defined, such as I want eight hours of sleep every night.

Why do I want to achieve it?

Often we try to make changes because we feel we should, not because we really want to. Without a genuine desire, it can be difficult to stick to a plan. So think about what's motivating you to achieve a goal (for example, because I want to make the most of my days with my family without feeling so tired).

How am I going to achieve it?

This is the key. The most important thing is to be clear about the action you'll take. So you might say: I will not drink any coffee after 8pm and go to bed by 11pm every weeknight for the next three weeks.

How will I know I've achieved it?

It can be helpful to think about what will be different if you achieve your goal. Maybe answer questions such as: How will I look? How will I feel? How will I behave? If you're trying to sleep better, your answer could be: I will look and feel less tired and be able to get out of bed when my alarm goes off in the morning.

Who will I involve in my plan?

You may just want to let others know what you're doing, or you may see them playing a part in helping you achieve your goal. For example, I will ask my partner and children to also go to bed by 11pm for the next three weeks.

How will I reward myself?

Following a plan can be tough, so rewarding yourself along the way is important. Remember, though, that your reward should not affect you reaching your goal or put a lot of hard work to waste. So don't stay up until 4am as a reward if you've been going to bed at 11pm to help you sleep better.

What might set me back and how will I deal with it?

As you know, life rarely runs smoothly and there may be times where you don't complete your plan. The important thing is to remember that this is okay. It happens. But when it does, it's good to know how you'll deal with it. For example, I know I sometimes watch TV even though I'm tired, so I'll make it my goal to switch it off by 10.30pm and get ready for bed. However, if I do want to watch a film that finishes at midnight, I'll go to bed by 10pm the next night.

How can local services and Macmillan help me reach my goal?

Hopefully today you'll learn more about the services and support available locally and from Macmillan. Use them to help you reach your goal. For example, I want to feel more relaxed to help me sleep, so I'll order some relaxation CDs from Macmillan or see if there are relaxation sessions taking place in my local area.



**Now you know what to do,
why not give it a go?**

Flip open the page and start your plan. You can also ask volunteers at today's clinic for help when you start to create your plan of action.

My plan of action

What do I want to achieve?

Who will I involve in my plan?

Why do I want to achieve it?

How will I reward myself?

How am I going to achieve it?

What might set me back and how will I deal with it?

How will I know I've achieved it?

How can local services and Macmillan help me reach my goal?

Useful information

Macmillan Cancer Support

We offer a range of support for people affected by cancer, including cancer information and emotional, financial and practical help. You can also get involved in Macmillan's campaigns to help improve cancer services locally and nationally.

Main website www.macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan Support Line **0808 808 00 00**

(call free Monday to Friday, 9am–8pm)

be.macmillan.org.uk Site where you can order free Macmillan information resources.

learnzone.macmillan.org.uk Access information about the courses and workshops Macmillan holds across the UK and a range of e-learning courses to improve your skills and knowledge.

Live Well – NHS Choices

Information and advice from the NHS on healthy living.

www.nhs.uk/livewell

Healthtalkonline

A website from the DIPEX (Database of Individual Patient Experiences) charity to help members of the public share their experiences with each other. You can watch or listen to interviews, read about people's experiences and find reliable information about conditions, treatment choices and support.

www.healthtalkonline.org

Patient UK

Information database covering a wide range of issues, including the support available to help you live a healthier lifestyle.

www.patient.co.uk

Directgov

Directory of public services and activities to help you live a fuller and more active life.

www.direct.gov.uk

Cancer is the toughest fight most of us will ever face. But no one should go through it alone. The Macmillan team is with you every step of the way, from the nurses and therapists helping you through treatment to the campaigners improving cancer care.

Together, we are all Macmillan Cancer Support.

Questions about living with cancer?

Call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**

(Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm)

Alternatively, visit macmillan.org.uk

Hard of hearing? Use textphone 0808 808 0121 or Text Relay.

Non English speaker? Interpreters available.

Printed using sustainable material. Please recycle

Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017),

Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604). MAC13053_BKLT