



Need to talk?

A specialist psychological support service for people with cancer, their family and close friends

Run by the psycho-oncology support team (POST)

Introduction

A diagnosis of cancer and the experiences that follow are likely to affect you and your family. This is quite understandable. You might find that you need support to make sense of what is happening.

We are a team of expert counsellors, psychotherapists, psychologists and psychiatrists in cancer. We are here to listen to your concerns, in a non-judgemental and safe space.

The aim of this booklet is to help you understand our service to see how it might help you, your family and/or your carer(s).

Who we see

We see a person diagnosed with cancer who receives treatment at Guy's and St Thomas', Kings, PRUH and Queen Mary's Hospital, Lewisham and Woolwich, as well as their family members and close friends. We see:

- People from point of diagnosis, through treatment, end of treatment and post-treatment, including those experiencing bereavement.
- You and your partner, family and/or close friends on an individual or group basis.
- Teenagers, children and young adults , whose parent is diagnosed with cancer in individual or family sessions.
- We can see you if you are in hospital at Guy's or St Thomas'.
- People who are also receiving support for mental health issues.

Common concerns

Adjusting to a cancer diagnosis and all the changes it brings can make you feel anxious, worried and low:

- You may worry that you are going to die, which can feel frightening.
- Treatment effects may include anxieties about how the treatment is given, dealing with symptoms of treatment, like pain, nausea, or changes in the way you feel or look.
- You might not want treatment, as you may feel scared, panicky, or not sure if you want to continue treatment for other reasons.
- Issues arising from the illness may cause difficulties in your relationships with others, including intimacy and sex.
- Specific problems you have had because of feeling anxious or low, including depression and panic attacks.
- Longer-term psychological problems may return or become worse e.g. past trauma, past losses.
- Issues about living with cancer effects, e.g. fear cancer will come back, fear of cancer progressing.
- Mourning, loss, and bereavement.

How we can help

We appreciate it can be difficult to seek help. We will talk with you to find out if our service it is right for you, and what approach might be best if it is. We provide a range of different therapy approaches, including psychiatry input, in a safe and confidential environment. You might find that,

- You are able to discuss things that you find difficult to talk about with family and friends.
- Talking through difficult experiences and feelings can help you to put them into perspective. It can also make you aware of different ways of managing.
- It can be useful to name difficult feelings like anger, guilt, loss, shock and sadness.
- You feel better able to deal with physical symptoms, stress, anxiety and mood issues. We can help you explore the issues and find techniques and strategies that may help you feel more in control.

Some people benefit from talking about their difficulties, some benefit by being prescribed appropriate medication and some by a combination of these approaches.

Please remember, we can see you alone or with your partner, family or close friends- whichever is best for you.

Therapy groups

It can be useful to share concerns with others in a safe and confidential space, as this can help you feel less alone with your feelings and experiences. We therefore run time-limited therapy groups, which are not drop-in and run over a period of weeks:

- Bereavement therapy
- Fear of cancer returning (Survivorship in ACTion)
- Men with cancer group

Specialist services

- Therapy for intimacy and sex related concerns, for individuals and/or couples
- Psychiatric support

Practical details

- We can meet you at Guy's, St Thomas' or Queen Mary's Hospital (QMH).
- Our meetings last for up to 50 minutes.
- We have some early morning and later appointment slots.
- We are open from Monday to Friday at Guy's and St Thomas'.
- Our opening hours at QMH are more limited; please ask for details.
- We initially offer up to eight meetings.
- You can access our service again if you have had a previous course of therapy.

As Guy's and St Thomas' is a teaching hospital, you may be seen by a professional-in-training who will be closely supervised by a member of the team.

How can I be referred?

Any health professional involved in your care can refer you. You can also contact the service directly (contact details below).

What happens next?

We will contact you when a request to be seen by us has been made. We will discuss your needs and book a first meeting with a therapist, or you will be sent an appointment letter. This can take up to 2 – 3 weeks. For more information, please contact us via Dimbleby Cancer Care on the telephone number over the page.

What if I need urgent help?

We do not provide a crisis service – if you have an immediate concern for yours or someone else's safety, please contact your GP or attend your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).



Dimbleby Cancer Care has a drop-in information area staffed by specialist nurses and offers complementary therapies, psychological support and benefits advice for patients and carers. We're located in the Welcome Village of the Cancer Centre at Guy's.

t: 020 7188 5918

e: DimblebyCancerCare@gstt.nhs.uk

The **Dimbleby Macmillan Support Centre** at Guy's Cancer at Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup offers information, psychological support and complementary therapies.

t: 020 7188 0771

e: DimblebyCancerCare@gstt.nhs.uk

Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals offer a range of cancer-related information leaflets for patients and carers, available at www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/cancer-leaflets. For information leaflets on other conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved.

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk

w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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