



coping together

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR COUPLES FACING CANCER

DEALING WITH STRESS AND WORRY

The challenges addressed in this booklet...

- I feel tense, angry and/or stressed
 - I feel worried or uncertain
 - I feel sad, down and/or isolated
- I feel unmotivated or low on energy
- I feel overwhelmed by my situation
 - I'm having difficulties sleeping
- I need more help or information resources

Note to reader

This booklet is not intended as a substitute for consultation with your health care professionals. Patients or partners with health care questions should call or see their health care professional promptly and should not disregard professional medical advice, or delay seeking it, because of information encountered in this booklet. Before commencing any health treatment, always consult your doctor.

All care has been taken to ensure that the information contained here is accurate at the time of publication. All names of patients and partners have been replaced to protect their anonymity. ***Coping-Together*** is not responsible for any injury or damage to persons or property arising out of, or related to, any use of the booklets, or to any errors or omissions.

DEALING WITH STRESS AND WORRY

Your reaction to a cancer diagnosis will be influenced by many things, such as whether anyone close to you has had cancer, whether you've been seriously ill yourself, and how you cope with stressful situations. Your experience may have helped you gain strength in some areas, but you may still struggle with others.

This booklet outlines strategies that may help you cope with some of the thoughts and emotions you are experiencing now.

Meet the experts

Every ***Coping-Together*** booklet has sections where health care professionals have been invited to discuss the information and strategies that are presented. Each expert is easy to identify – their picture is included next to their input, and you will recognise some of their faces from the ***Coping-Together*** DVD.

In this booklet, ***Dealing with Stress and Worry***, our experts are Dr Ben Britton and Associate Professor Jane Turner.

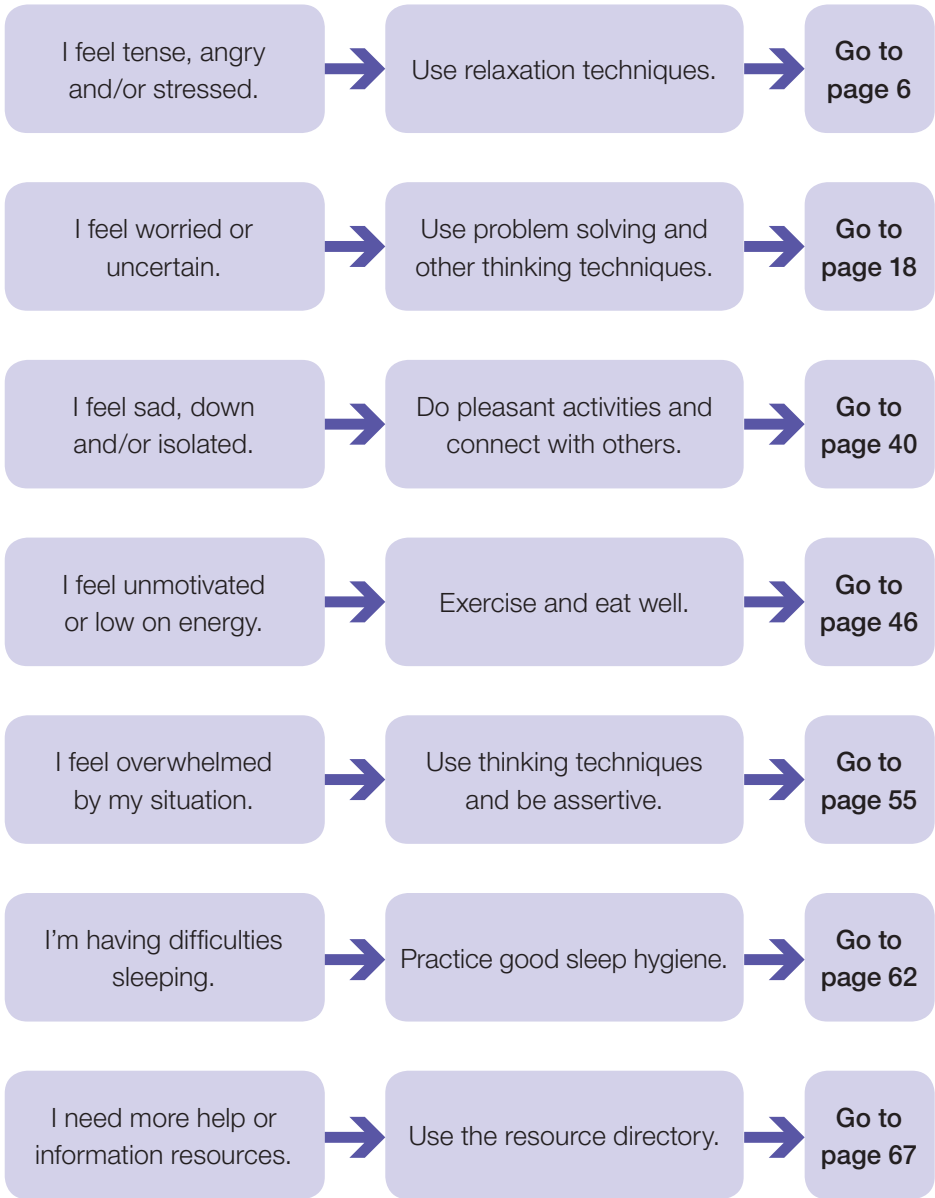


Dr Ben Britton is a Clinical and Health Psychologist who has worked in Psycho-Oncology at the Calvary Mater Newcastle for over seven years. He has particular clinical interests in the treatment of head and neck cancers, urological cancers and difficult to treat populations. Dr Britton's research interests revolve around medical outcomes of psychological interventions.



Associate Professor Jane Turner has worked as a Consultation Liaison Psychiatrist in oncology for over 20 years. She has extensive experience in the design and delivery of health professional education, and has taken an active role in the development of consumer resources and a number of educational initiatives for people affected by cancer and their families.

The following flowchart shows some common concerns couples may have as they adjust to a cancer diagnosis. Navigate your way through the chart until you recognise your own concern and choose the strategies recommended on the right. Go to the relevant pages for more detailed information.



I feel tense, angry and/or stressed

👍👍 I felt so wound up and tense, I just couldn't sit still. I'd stand up, but then have nowhere to go, so I'd sit down again and stay wound up and tense. 🦋🦋

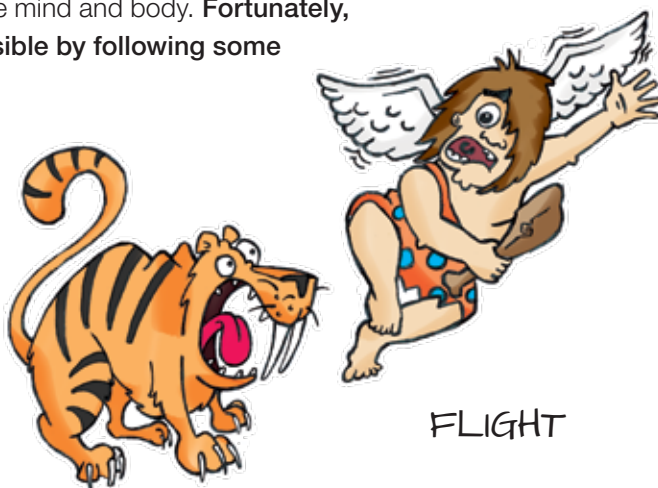
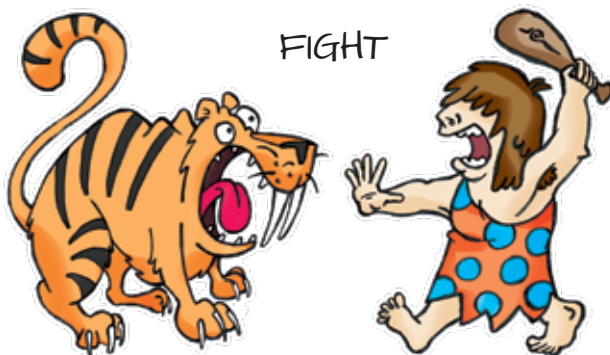
Kamila, diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

👍👍 Sometimes, it's all I can think about, what Catarina's going through, what comes next. It's like we are always on the go, always stressed. 🦋🦋

Ivan, husband of Catarina, diagnosed with breast cancer.

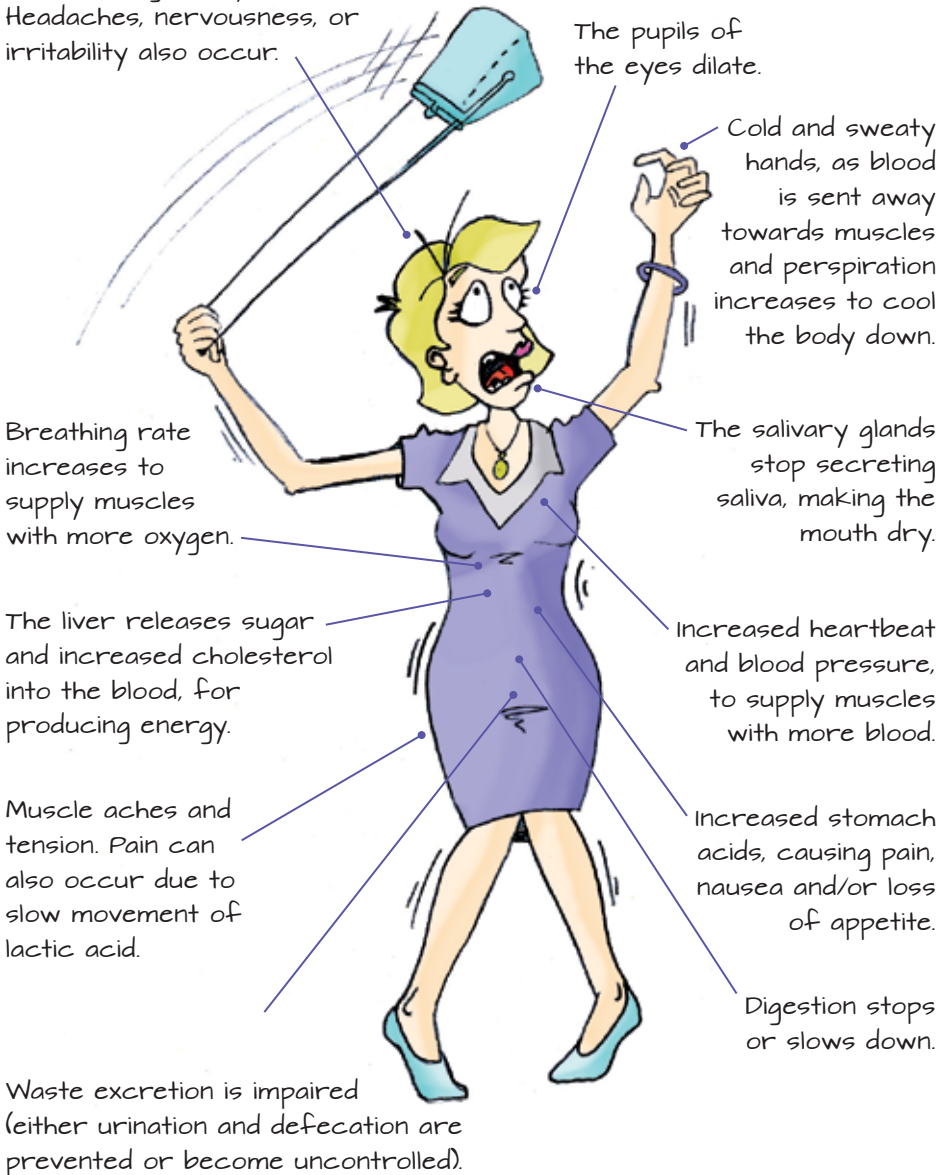
Stress refers to the way the mind and body react to some situations or threats of harm and is often accompanied by feelings of tension, worry, nervousness, anger, frustration, or sadness.

Stress activates the brain's *fight or flight response*, which triggers the body to produce hormones or chemicals that enable it to fight or flee quickly, resulting in many physiological changes. This process, while completely normal, puts quite a lot of strain on the mind and body. **Fortunately, reducing stress is possible by following some relatively simple steps.**



How the fight or flight response affects the body

The hypothalamus, in the brain, stimulates the release of hormones and chemicals (such as adrenaline), which change body activities. Headaches, nervousness, or irritability also occur.



Suggestion to reduce tension, anger and stress

Relaxation strategies involve developing skills that can reduce the effects of stress and alleviate tension, worry and anger to help you feel more in control. We suggest **four** main strategies:

1. **Controlled diaphragm breathing.**
2. **Progressive muscle relaxation.**
3. **Guided imagery/visualisation.**
4. **Mindfulness of the breath.**

Many of these can be combined – it's a matter of choosing what suits you best. Although these may seem quite simple and straightforward, you may find they're not as easy to apply as they first appear! The trick is to practise these techniques regularly. Some of these strategies are featured on the **'Learning to Relax'** CD supplied in your package.



Top Tip: Prepare for stressful situations in advance by practising the suggested relaxation strategies. You could also listen to the **'Learning to Relax'** CD using headphones during treatment.



While our suggested strategies focus on relaxation, there are many other strategies outlined in this booklet (e.g. thinking techniques, pleasant activities and exercise) that can reduce stress. Feel free to pick from these other strategies, because it is about what works for *you*. Use the flowchart at the beginning of this booklet to identify other strategies that might be helpful.

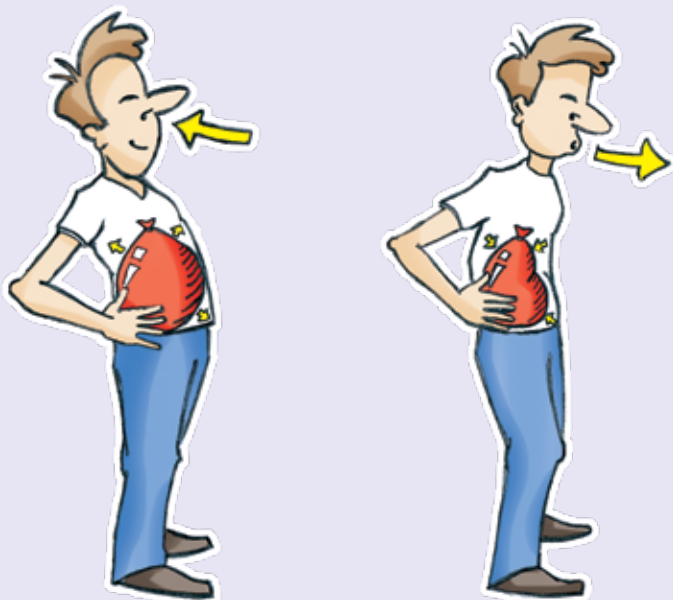
Suggestion 1: Controlled diaphragm breathing

Controlled diaphragm breathing is a great way of reducing stress and tension and can be done for **just a few minutes, absolutely anywhere!** All you have to do is take the deepest breath you can and then let it out. You can practise in the car, at the supermarket, in the shower, at the beach, in the doctor's waiting room – wherever you happen to be. Use the following instructions or try a guided exercise on the '**Learning to Relax**' CD.

Steps for controlled diaphragm breathing

Step 1: Imagine that your stomach is a balloon

- ✓ As you breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, imagine you're inflating and deflating the balloon.
- ✓ When you breathe in, you're filling up the balloon, so your stomach expands. Feel it travel up through your abdomen, pushing out your lower ribs, then into your lungs.
- ✓ When you breathe out, you're letting air out of the balloon, so your rib cage and stomach become flatter as breath is released.



Step 2: Pay attention to the timing of your breath

- ✓ While you breathe in, count to three.
- ✓ While you breathe out, count to three.

Step 3: Train your brain

- ✓ Whenever you start to breathe out, say 'relax' to yourself in a calm and soothing way.

Step 4: Put all of these steps together

- ✓ Take a deep breath in, through your nose, taking the full three seconds to fill up your 'balloon.'
- ✓ Without holding your breath, start to breathe out through your mouth, saying 'relax' to yourself and taking the full three seconds to deflate your 'balloon.'
- ✓ Repeat until you feel that you have a good rhythm going, then stop whenever you like.
- ✓ Notice the sensation of tension draining out of your body.
- ✓ Don't be concerned if this is hard to achieve at first. It's often quite challenging to change breathing patterns, especially if you're worried or stressed for a long period of time. With persistence will come mastery.

Top Tip: Controlled diaphragm breathing should be used as soon as signs of stress or over-breathing occur. Practise until it becomes an automatic response when signs of stress occur.



Suggestion 2: Progressive muscle relaxation

Like controlled diaphragm breathing, progressive muscle relaxation is particularly helpful for reducing stress and tension. It can also be done for **just a few minutes, almost anywhere and anytime**. Progressive muscle relaxation simply involves tensing and relaxing a muscle or muscle group. Use the following instructions or try a guided exercise on the **‘Learning to Relax’** CD.

Steps for progressive muscle relaxation

Step 1: Get ready. Set aside 20 to 30 minutes for this exercise, if you plan to do it in full, otherwise you can complete just a few steps. Perhaps put on relaxing music and settle into a comfortable position (sitting, standing or lying down). Close your eyes, if it helps you feel more relaxed.

Step 2: Start to use diaphragm breathing (described on the previous two pages) and practise it for a minute or two before moving on to the next step.

Step 3: Curl your toes downward to tighten your feet. Hold them like this for a full breath in, then relax your toes as you breathe out, remembering to say ‘relax’ to yourself. **Repeat**

Step 4: Tighten your calf muscles by pulling your toes upwards. Hold them like this for a full breath in, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 5: Squeeze your thigh muscles all the way down to your knees to tighten them. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 6: Squeeze your buttocks together tightly. Hold, then relax. Feel the muscles in your hips and legs go loose and limp. **Repeat**

Step 7: If you experience lower back pain, skip this step. Tighten your lower back by arching it. If you’re lying down, lift your stomach from the floor. If you’re sitting or standing, push your stomach out. Hold it out like this for a full breath in, then relax your back, remembering to say ‘relax’ to yourself as you breathe out. **Repeat**

Step 8: Tighten your stomach muscles by sucking your stomach in. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 9: Tighten your chest muscles by sucking your chest in. Hold, then relax. Feel the tension flowing out of your torso as you breathe out. **Repeat**

Step 10: Tighten your hands by clenching your fists. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 11: Tighten your biceps by curling your forearms up toward your shoulders and ‘making a muscle’ with your arms. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 12: Tighten your triceps by holding your arms straight out in front of you and aiming your hands toward the floor. Hold them like this for a full breath in, then relax your arms, remembering to say ‘relax’ to yourself as you breathe out. **Repeat**

Step 13: Tighten your shoulder muscles by pushing your shoulders back as though you’re trying to make them touch each other behind you. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 14: Tighten your shoulder muscles again, by pulling your shoulders forward as though you’re trying to make them touch each other in front of you. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 15: Tighten your shoulder muscles again by raising them up as though you’re trying to touch your ears with them. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 16: Tighten your neck muscles by **very gently** pulling your head back as though you’re trying to touch your back with it. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 17: Tighten your neck muscles again, by **very gently** pulling your head down as though you’re trying to touch your chest with it. Hold it like this for a full breath in, then relax your neck, remembering to say ‘relax’ to yourself as you breathe out. **Repeat**

Step 18: Tighten your neck muscles again, by **very gently** pushing your head to the left as though you’re trying to touch your left shoulder with it. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 19: Tighten your neck muscles again, by **very gently** pushing your head to the right as though you’re trying to touch your right shoulder with it. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 20: Tighten your neck and jaw by closing your mouth and pushing your tongue as hard as you can against the roof of your mouth. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 21: Tighten your jaw by opening your mouth as wide as you can. Hold, then relax. Let your lips stay apart and your jaw go loose. **Repeat**

Step 22: Tighten your forehead and eye muscles by frowning and clenching your eyes tightly shut. Hold them like this for a full breath in and then relax your eyes and forehead, remembering to say 'relax' to yourself as you breathe out. **Repeat**

Step 23: Tighten your forehead and eye muscles again by closing your eyes gently then raising your eyebrows as high as you can. Hold, then relax. **Repeat**

Step 24: Mentally scan your body for any remaining tension. If a particular area remains tense, repeat one or two tighten-relax cycles for that group of muscles.

Step 25: Notice how limp and heavy your body feels, and imagine a wonderful wave of relaxation washing over your body from the top of your head to your toes. Continue your controlled diaphragm breathing for a few minutes.

Step 26: Take your time in easing yourself back into moving around again.

Suggestion 3: Guided imagery/visualisation

Guided imagery or visualisation takes **only a few minutes** and involves using your imagination to visualise a scene, object or place that you find relaxing, calming or pleasing. In other words, it's a way of indulging in some vivid daydreaming. Use the following instructions or try a guided exercise on the **'Learning to Relax'** CD.

Steps for guided imagery / visualisation

Step 1: Settle into a comfortable position and close your eyes.

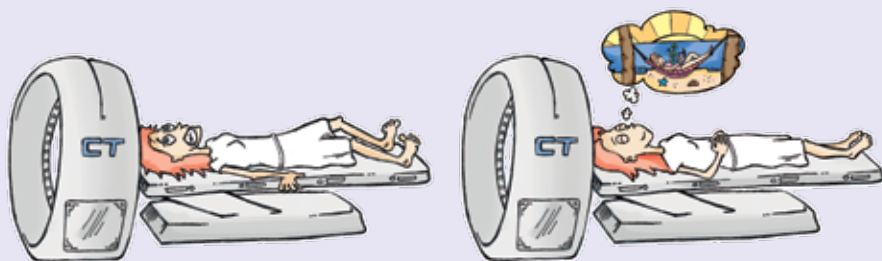
Step 2: Start to use controlled diaphragm breathing, described in Suggestion 1, and do so for a minute or two before moving on to the next step.

Step 3: Start to see, in your mind's eye, the most relaxing place you can imagine. This might be a beach in a tropical paradise, where the water is cool and clear, soothing music is playing and there is nothing to do but sip on refreshing fruit juice.

Step 4: As you imagine your scene, try to involve all of your senses. What does it look like? What vivid colours fill the scene? How does it feel? What can you smell? Are there some special scents filling your nostrils? Do you hear the roar of a fire, the splash of a waterfall, or a bird song? What other sounds can you hear? Make your vision so real that you can see it clearly and even taste it!

Step 5: Stay here for as long as you like. Enjoy your 'surroundings' and imagine yourself far away from the source of your stress. Remember your slow, deep breathing. When you're ready to come back to reality, count back from ten or twenty, and tell yourself that when you get to 'one', you'll feel serene and alert, and enjoy the rest of your day.

Adapted from <http://stress.about.com/od/generaltechniques/ht/howtoimagery.htm>.



Suggestion 4: Mindfulness of the breath

This exercise takes **only a few minutes** and involves relaxing by focusing intently on your breath. You can use this mindfulness technique during daily tasks, such as eating, washing the dishes, gardening, waiting for the bus, or going to bed at night. Whatever you're doing, concentrate on how all your senses are experiencing the activity; really notice the details.

Steps for mindfulness of the breath

Step 1: Sit comfortably by placing your feet flat on the floor and your hands in your lap. If you find it uncomfortable to sit, you can lie down. Close your eyes, or keep them open and focus on a fixed point.

Step 2: Turn your attention to your breathing. The aim is not to change your breathing, just to focus on your breath. Notice the breath as it enters your body and fills your abdomen. Follow it all the way in, and all the way out. Try focusing on a particular sensation; the rise and fall of your chest or abdomen or the flow of air as it enters your nose. You'll find that your mind wanders away from your breath; just observe where your mind has gone and gently bring your attention back to your breathing again.

Step 3: Continue to focus on your breath for a few moments. Each time your mind wanders, notice your thoughts and bring yourself back to the breath.

Step 4: When you feel relaxed, slowly bring your attention back to where you are and to what's happening around you. Remember that you can bring your attention back to your breathing at any time during the day when you're feeling tense or stressed.

What others say about using relaxation strategies

👍👍 Now that I know how to do them, I find the breathing exercises to be great. Before learning deep breathing, I couldn't relax at all. It's really handy to be able to relax when you need to and it's great when you're first diagnosed, to be given strategies for things you can actually do. 🗨️

Tina, diagnosed with breast cancer.

👍👍 When you're all wound up, you do tend to forget to breathe and don't do it. Breathing properly is one of the best things I've found to calm me down. 🗨️

Rita, diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

👍👍 I've done relaxation exercises on and off since I was 16 years of age, but I'd never seen one called 'progressive muscle relaxation' before and given the actual steps. You look at it and see 'Okay, it's just squeezing your muscles tight and relaxing them'. It's a practical approach to relaxation, it isn't that hard and anyone can do it. And it works; that's what it's about. 🗨️

Jennifer, wife of Ron, diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

👍👍 Muscle relaxation is really helpful and useful. I know for a fact that it can calm you right down and make symptoms go away that shouldn't be there, like a racing heart when you're stressed. 🗨️

Craig, diagnosed with prostate cancer.

👍👍 Visualising the ocean and stuff like that is good for me. When you have cancer, you're bombarded with a lot of information, but visualisation helps you focus, clear your mind and totally relax. Afterwards, you feel like you can cope better. Like you've gone 'Okay, all that tension is gone'. Because it builds up and emotionally it's very difficult, so to have that resource and incorporate it with your deep breathing is great. It really helps when anxiety kicks in and takes over. 🗨️

Therese, partner of Joseph, diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Why relaxation strategies can help – What the experts have to say



When stress and anxiety persist, the body remains in a constant state of alertness, waiting to fight off or flee from the ‘threat’, even if that threat is just a thought or group of thoughts that can’t be dismissed. The brain sends messages to the body telling it that it needs to stay tense and cannot relax until the threat is gone. **But when we make the effort to release tension from our bodies, the brain stops sending these messages and the body’s stress response is switched off.**

Relaxation techniques

Controlled diaphragm breathing helps to slow down our breathing and heart rate. Progressive muscle relaxation helps to reduce the tension in your body, leading to a greater sense of comfort.

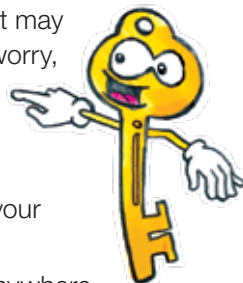
Guided imagery/visualisation is effective because the body responds to imagined events the same way as it does to actual ones and you can help your body relax by simply visualising positive and soothing images.

Mindfulness allows us to reconnect with the present and provides a break from some of the things that worry us, giving us a chance to gain some perspective about the way things are at this moment.

– **Dr Ben Britton**

Key Points: Reducing tension, anger and stress

1. Stress is a typical reaction to difficult situations. It may be accompanied by emotions such as tension, worry, nervousness, anger, frustration, or sadness.
2. Relaxation techniques are an effective way to calm your mind and body.
3. Relaxation techniques often focus on changing your breathing and focusing your mind.
4. Relaxation techniques can be done just about anywhere.



I feel worried or uncertain

👏👏 A lot of the medical appointments are stressful; not the appointments themselves, but the weeks leading up to them and the anxiety about what the outcome might be. 🗣️🗣️

Steven, husband of Barbara, diagnosed with breast cancer.

👏👏 I was really surprised that in this day and age there was still so much uncertainty about how best to treat cancer. That made me worry a lot more about my diagnosis. 🗣️🗣️

Antonio, diagnosed with prostate cancer.

It's very common for people diagnosed with cancer, and their partners, to feel scared, worried, nervous and anxious. Fortunately, **there are things you can do to manage your worries and uncertainty.**

What's the difference between being worried and having clinical anxiety?

Everybody gets worried and anxious, and you're bound to feel this way when dealing with cancer. Anxiety can be very useful, because it can motivate us and enhance our thinking and reactions. Generally, when the situation causing the anxiety passes, the anxiety itself will also fade away.



The main difference between 'worry' and 'clinical anxiety' is that, in the case of clinical anxiety, the anxiety doesn't just pass and a person's worries and fears get in the way of their relationships and their ability to work and enjoy life. If you're finding that fears and worries are affecting you in this way, it's a really good idea to seek help. Seeing your GP is a good place to start, or use the resource directory included at the end of this booklet.

– Dr Ben Britton

Top Tip: Medicare rebates for seeking help

When a person is referred by a GP, psychiatrist or paediatrician to a psychologist, clinical psychologist, social worker or occupational therapist in mental health, they can claim a rebate. A rebate can be claimed for part of the cost for up to 10 individual sessions and 10 group sessions per calendar year. Rebates are also available for consultations with a psychiatrist, with part or all of the cost covered by Medicare.



Suggestions for dealing with your worries and uncertainty

1. **Changing your self-talk.**
2. **Unfinished objects (UFOs).**
3. **Mental tasks.**
4. **Worry postponement.**
5. **Problem solving.**



While our suggested strategies focus on using different ways of thinking, there are many other strategies outlined in this booklet (e.g. relaxation techniques, pleasant activities and exercise) that can also be very helpful in dealing with worries. Feel free to pick from these other strategies, because it's about what works for you. Use the flowchart at the beginning of this booklet to identify other strategies that might be helpful.

Suggestion 1: Changing your self-talk

Changing self-talk helps people become aware of unhelpful thoughts that contribute to their worry and negative feelings, and to challenge them with more helpful thoughts. Worries and problems can then be approached with a clearer mind so that they can be dealt with, rather than just worried about.

Many people find this a very helpful exercise, but don't be discouraged if it doesn't feel right for you. This technique may not be right for everyone.

Read through the steps on how to challenge your unhelpful thoughts and the examples on page 22–23. If you find the steps helpful, move on to the blank table to practise modifying your unhelpful self-talk. Simply write down the feelings and self-talk you're experiencing and answer the questions listed in the table.

Nothing's going to help. You just can't cope. You're falling apart.

Little things can help you feel better. There are some things you are dealing with well.



Steps for changing your self-talk

Step 1: Pay attention to your feelings

- ✓ When you're feeling upset, take the time to think about what has triggered these feelings.

Step 2: Pay attention to your self-talk (thoughts)

- ✓ Think about the thoughts you're having that are related to you feeling upset. Ask yourself:
 - Is there evidence that this thought is completely accurate and true?
 - Is this thought a realistic one?
 - Is it helping me to think this way?

Step 3: Challenge the unhelpful self-talk

- ✓ If you answer 'no' to any of the above questions, for any thought you are having, challenge it. Ask yourself:
 - Is there a chance this thought is overly negative?
 - Is there a chance this thought exaggerates how big my problems are?
 - Is it possible that this thought underestimates how well I might be able to deal with my problems?
 - If my best friend told me they were thinking this way, what would I say to them?

Step 4: Find helpful replacement self-talk

- ✓ Make sure that the replacement thought is **believable**. There must be evidence that there is truth to the new self-talk.
- ✓ Don't try to be overly positive or pressure yourself to put on a brave face, just be realistic.

EXAMPLE		STEP 2
Feelings	Your self-talk	Ask yourself...
Worried Guilty	<i>This cancer is going to ruin everything.</i> <i>I'm putting so many demands on my wife, she must be so fed up.</i>	<div>✓ Is there evidence that this thought is completely accurate and true?</div> <div>✓ Is this thought a realistic one?</div> <div>✓ Is it helping me to think this way?</div> <div><i>If you answer “no” to any of these questions, move to the next column</i></div> <div></div>
Distressed Panicky	<i>I just can't cope with this. I'm going to find out that my partner's cancer has spread and I'll completely fall apart.</i>	<div>✓ Is there evidence that this thought is completely accurate and true?</div> <div>✓ Is this thought a realistic one?</div> <div>✓ Is it helping me to think this way?</div> <div><i>If you answer “no” to any of these questions, move to the next column</i></div> <div></div>

	STEP 3 Challenge unhelpful self-talk	STEP 4 Helpful replacement self-talk
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is there a chance that this thought is overly negative? ✓ Is there a chance that this thought exaggerates how big my problems are? ✓ Is it possible that this thought underestimates how well I might be able to deal with my problems? ✓ If my best friend told me they were thinking this way, what would I say to him/her? 	<p>The cancer is getting in the way of things already, but I guess it won't ruin everything. I am being too negative.</p> <p>My wife has not mentioned she is fed up, and I am still doing the tasks I can.</p> <p>I'd tell my best friend that it's natural for him to be feeling a bit overwhelmed, but he is doing all he can, and he is supporting his wife emotionally.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is there a chance that this thought is overly negative? ✓ Is there a chance that this thought exaggerates how big my problems are? ✓ Is it possible that this thought underestimates how well I might be able to deal with my problems? ✓ If my best friend told me they were thinking this way, what would I say to him/her? 	<p>I am thinking too negatively; the cancer may not have spread and I may be exaggerating how bad it is.</p> <p>I don't feel like I'm coping very well and that will get worse if it has spread, but I won't be alone. My family and friends have been supportive and they'll stay that way, no matter what. I'd remind my best friend of that, if he were thinking the same way.</p> <p>When I get a good night's sleep and focus on breathing slowly and deeply, I feel much calmer. I can deal with things as they come, one day at a time, and make my days pleasant ones.</p>

Exercise: Your table for using the steps
for changing your self-talk

Feelings	Your self-talk	Ask yourself...
		<div><div>✓</div>Is there evidence that this thought is completely accurate and true?</div> <div><div>✓</div>Is this thought a realistic one?</div> <div><div>✓</div>Is it helping me to think this way?</div> <div>If you answer “no” to any of these questions, move to the next column</div> <div></div>
		<div><div>✓</div>Is there evidence that this thought is completely accurate and true?</div> <div><div>✓</div>Is this thought a realistic one?</div> <div><div>✓</div>Is it helping me to think this way?</div> <div>If you answer “no” to any of these questions, move to the next column</div> <div></div>

	Challenge unhelpful self-talk	Helpful replacement self-talk
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is there a chance that this thought is overly negative? ✓ Is there a chance that this thought exaggerates how big my problems are? ✓ Is it possible that this thought underestimates how well I might be able to deal with my problems? ✓ If my best friend told me they were thinking this way, what would I say to him/her? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is there a chance that this thought is overly negative? ✓ Is there a chance that this thought exaggerates how big my problems are? ✓ Is it possible that this thought underestimates how well I might be able to deal with my problems? ✓ If my best friend told me they were thinking this way, what would I say to him/her? 	

Suggestion 2: Unfinished objects (UFOs)

Walk around your house and begin a list of all the little things that you've been meaning to do, but haven't gotten around to finishing. Things like fixing a knob on a drawer or changing a light bulb. Keep the list handy and when you're feeling overwhelmed with worry, pick up the list and select one or more 'unfinished objects' or 'UFOs' to do. You'll be surprised at how it can help you feel that you've achieved something. Don't pressure yourself to do everything on the list; just do what you need to do to take your mind off your worries, ***especially those worries that just won't go away.***

Another useful strategy is to think about the bigger tasks that need attention and break them into smaller chunks. For example, feeling overwhelmed about a large amount of ironing can lead to avoidance. Deciding that you'll iron three items can help you actually tackle the task, because it's more manageable.

Where do I start?



Suggestion 3: Mental tasks

Mental tasks are things like counting your breaths or the number of passing cars, mental arithmetic (such as reciting times tables or counting back from 100 by sevens), crossword puzzles, reading books, or planning how you'll complete an ordinary task using a basic step-by-step approach (such as a 'how to' bake a cake or change oil in a car). Almost anything that requires a bit of thought and mental effort can be a mental task – just as long as it keeps your brain busy for a while.

Suggestion 4: Worry postponement

Worry postponement is about allowing yourself a period of time during the day when you get your worrying done. The trick is to stick with this time period and finish worrying when time is up. So, if a worrying thought pops up in the morning, you can say to yourself *"That's stressful, but I'm choosing to not worry about it right now. I'll deal with it later today, between 4 and 5pm, when I can focus on my worries and think more about how I'll deal with them"*.

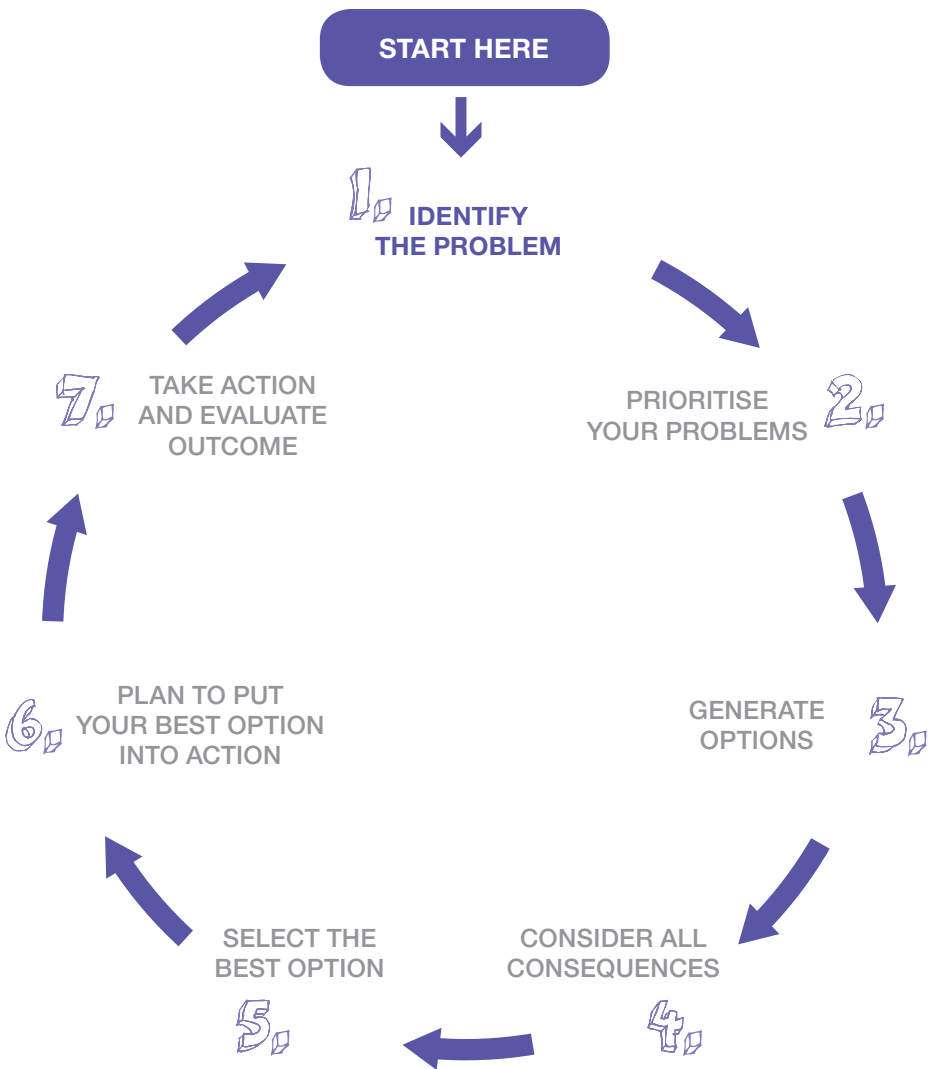
Top Tip: Sometimes thoughts can be persistent and keep coming back, even though you do not want to think about them. To help your mind move on from the thought, try:

1. Acknowledging the thought and asking it to leave your mind.
2. Writing it down on a piece of paper, that way your mind knows it won't be overlooked or forgotten.



Suggestion 5: Problem solving

When worried by a problem, it can be hard to know what to do about it, which can make you worry even more. The following steps to problem solving can help you think through and solve problems successfully.



FACT: Solutions to problems can be action-based or emotion-based. Action-based solutions mean that you do something to directly address the problem. Emotion-based solutions mean that you do things to change the way you feel. A **good solution** may involve both action-based and emotion-based responses.



Read on for problem solving scenarios showing how each step can be addressed.

STEP 1: Identify the problem

Make a list of your challenges. Sometimes defining the problem can prompt steps to a solution. Look at the problem in as many different ways as you can. Are other people affected? How does the problem look to your family, your friends, your doctors or your boss?

If the problem feels too big or overwhelming, **break it down into smaller ones.**

Scenario – Step 1

Samuel has been undergoing treatment for colorectal cancer and has little energy. His partner, Sofia, has been as supportive as she can, but lately she's been worrying to the point of lying awake at night. She hasn't told anyone what she's been going through because she feels she needs to stay 'in control' for Samuel's sake. She's started to feel a bit resentful and this, in turn, makes her feel guilty. Samuel can tell that something's wrong and Sofia eventually tells him a bit about what's been happening to her.

Sofia and Samuel decide to work through the problem, starting by identifying it as: "*Sofia is feeling weighed down by the pressure of Samuel's cancer*". They realise that this is a broad issue which, stated in such a general way, will be difficult to tackle. So their best bet is to break it down into this list of challenges:

- ✓ Sofia is overwhelmed by worries about Samuel's treatment.
- ✓ Sofia is feeling really tired because of her lack of sleep and finds that she's struggling to get things done.
- ✓ Sofia feels that she shouldn't talk about how she's feeling, because that would be a selfish thing to do while Samuel is so unwell.

STEP 2: Prioritise your problems

First, list the concerns or challenges you've identified that need immediate attention, followed by those that can wait.

Scenario – Step 2

Sofia and Samuel decided that the first problem they'll tackle is Sofia's reluctance to talk about how she feels, because they figure that this will probably help her to deal with feeling selfish and guilty and might even help her get to sleep more easily and perhaps worry a bit less. They also think that it will help them figure out what sort of emotional support Sofia needs.

STEP 3: Generate options

List all the available options for dealing with the most urgent problem. Identify as many solutions as possible and don't think too much about the worth of each idea. Think of how you've solved problems in the past. Use your creativity and don't restrict yourself.

Top Tip: **Quantity** can lead to **quality** when brainstorming solutions. Make a list of all your ideas, then think about how those ideas could be combined or modified.



Scenario – Step 3

Sofia and Samuel come up with the following options:

- ✓ Try to ignore how Sofia's feeling and just get on with it.
- ✓ Make a list of all the reasons why talking about what Sofia's feeling is and isn't a selfish thing to do.
- ✓ Ask Sofia's best friend what she thinks about Sofia talking about her feelings.
- ✓ Ask a health care professional (e.g. GP, social worker, telephone counsellor) what they think about Sofia talking about her feelings.

STEP 4: Consider all consequences

Think about the positive and negative consequences of all possible options.

Questions to ask when evaluating the consequences of your options:

- ✓ What are this option's advantages? What are the disadvantages?
- ✓ Who will that option affect? How much time and effort will that option take?
- ✓ What are the short-term and long-term consequences of this option?

Scenario – Step 4

An extract from Sofia and Samuel's problem solving plan is included here:

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Try to ignore Sofia's feelings and just get on with it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It takes very little effort.• Sofia won't have to feel like she's being selfish.• Sofia can avoid feeling like she's burdening others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Samuel will continue to worry about Sofia and how she's coping.• Sofia is likely to keep feeling the way she does now, and might even start to feel worse.• Samuel cares too much about Sofia to want to ignore how she feels, so it's probably unrealistic.
Make a list of all the reasons why talking about what Sofia's feeling is and isn't a selfish thing to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sofia will be able to help Samuel understand her thinking.• Samuel will be able to help Sofia understand why he thinks it's not selfish to talk about how she feels.• The list might help convince Sofia that it's okay to talk about her feelings.• Just making the list might help Sofia to open up about her feelings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The list might further convince Sofia that it's selfish for her to talk about her feelings.• Making lists can be tedious and feel a bit contrived.

STEP 5: Select the best option

Choose one possible solution! Make a choice and set a time limit to reach your goal. This option may not be your final solution, but it's the best available option.

Scenario – Step 5

Sofia and Samuel decide that the best option is: *“Make a list of all the reasons why talking about what Sofia’s feeling is and isn’t a selfish thing to do”*. They feel that this is a good place to start, as they’d really like to work through this together and understand each other’s perspective.

STEP 6: Plan to put your best option into action

Put your chosen option into action by planning **what, how, who, how long and what if?**

Questions to consider when putting your best option into action:

- ✓ What needs to be done?
- ✓ How will you achieve this?
- ✓ What resources will you require?
- ✓ Who will be responsible for what?
- ✓ How much time is needed to implement the option?
- ✓ What will happen if unexpected difficulties arise?

Scenario – Step 6

Sofia and Samuel plan how to put their chosen option into action.

Steps / Resources required	Who	When
Decide on a good time to sit down and make the list together.	Sofia and Samuel	Immediately
Pens and paper	Sofia	Just before the time decided upon to make list.

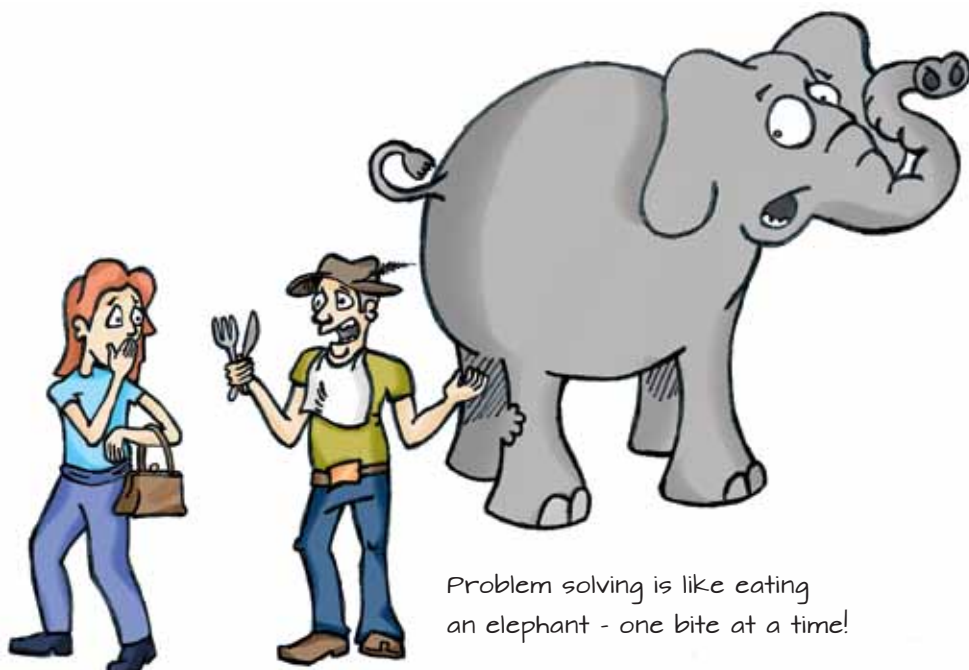
STEP 7: Take action and evaluate outcome

You're now ready to put your plan into action. Once implemented, your plan should also be monitored and evaluated to determine if it achieves the outcome you expect and desire.

Not all problems have perfect solutions and some solutions may not work as anticipated. Just do your best and repeat the previous two steps as needed.

Use the table on the following pages to work through a problem you're currently facing.

Top Tip: Although it's often easier to deal with a problem one step at a time, this doesn't mean that you're limited to just one solution. If another option seems like a good, achievable one to implement at the same time as another, give it a go.



Problem solving is like eating
an elephant - one bite at a time!

Exercise: Our problem solving plan

Follow the steps in this table with your partner.

Step	Notes
<p>1. Identify the problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Make a list of the challenges you're facing.✓ Look at the problem in as many different ways as you can.✓ If the problem feels too big or overwhelming, break it down into smaller ones.	
<p>2. Prioritise your problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Identify the concerns in Step 1 that need immediate attention, followed by those that can wait.	
<p>3. Generate options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Select your most urgent problem and list all of the options available to you for dealing with it.✓ Include every idea you have, no matter how unusual it seems. Be creative!	

Step	Notes
4. Consider all consequences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What are the advantages of this option? ✓ What are the disadvantages of this option? ✓ What are the short- and long-term consequences of this option? 	Option
5. Select the best option	
6. Plan to put your best option into action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What needs to be done? ✓ How will you achieve this? ✓ What resources will you require? ✓ Who will be responsible for what? ✓ How much time is needed to implement the option? ✓ What will happen if unexpected difficulties arise? 	Steps / Resources required
7. Take action and evaluate outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Put your plan into action. ✓ It's important not only to implement your chosen option, but to monitor and evaluate your plan to ensure that the outcome is as you expected and desired. Just try your best and repeat Steps 5-7 as needed. <p>Adapted from Nezu, Nezu, and D'Zurilla (2007) and Chang and Kelly (1993).</p>	Did your plan work? Why? Why not?
	Were the outcomes what you had expected?
	If your plan was unsuccessful, what could you change to make it more successful?
	If you need to try another one of the options you listed at Step 4, which one will it be?

	Advantages	Disadvantages
	Who	When

What others say about dealing with their worries/uncertainties

👍👍 Until I forced myself to step back and look carefully at all of the possibilities, I had absolutely no idea how I was going to keep on top of everything. I spoke to a psychologist, who showed me how I could solve problems in a structured way and reminded me to think about who could help. It ended up being one of the most important things I did. 🙌🙌

Craig, diagnosed with prostate cancer.

👍👍 I had a really hard time just getting near the hospital when I went in for treatment. I just felt so nervous. My husband helped me come up with a list of things that I could say to myself when all I could think was 'This is awful, I hate having to go through this'. I'd say to myself instead 'Yeah, this is bad, but I can keep doing this. No matter how tired or ill I feel, I will get through this. It will end one day and that will be a great day to look forward to'. 🙌🙌

Eva, diagnosed with melanoma.

How dealing with your worries or uncertainty can help – What the experts have to say



Changing your self-talk

Everyone encounters worrying situations and what we say to ourselves (self-talk) about them has a direct impact on how we feel. Negative thoughts like 'things will never improve' are often far more negative than they should be. We're not suggesting you should simply 'be positive', but being optimistic, without denying that cancer is worth worrying about, can be helpful. Completely avoiding negative thoughts or feelings about cancer is generally ineffective. What you're aiming for is realistic self-talk that acknowledges the impact that cancer has had on your life, but also acknowledges that you have the capacity to deal with it.

UFOs/Mental tasks

You might be facing worries and negative thoughts that just won't go away, no matter what you do. When this is the case, it's useful to think about how much emotional energy you're putting into it and consider whether you could direct this energy into something achievable. Completing small tasks can give you a surprising sense of accomplishment that makes you feel good about some aspects of your overall situation.

Worry postponement

Sometimes delaying dealing with worries is the best way to cope in the short-term. Putting some distance between you and the situation can help you gather composure and the personal resources you need to be able to worry about it effectively when you reach the time of day you've set aside for it.

Problem solving

Because we solve problems every day, we usually don't think about how we actually do it. Cancer brings many new problems to deal with, so it's useful to think about different ways to approach problem solving.

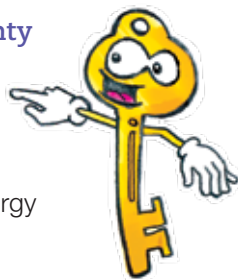
Problem solving via the step-by-step process we suggest can help you:

- ✓ Work out exactly what you're trying to solve.
- ✓ Break down overwhelming problems into smaller, more solvable problems.
- ✓ Consider the resources and support you can draw upon.
- ✓ Provide a sound basis for important decision making.
- ✓ Feel in control of what you're facing, and less anxious about problems.

– **Associate Professor Jane Turner**

Key Points: Dealing with worries and uncertainty

1. Replacing negative self-talk with realistic messages allows you to see your challenges more accurately.
2. Completing unfinished tasks helps direct your energy away from your worries and provides a sense of accomplishment when you get things done.
3. Allow yourself some time each day to worry and try to deflect or defer worrying thoughts when they pop into your head at other times.
4. Problem solving is an active way of thinking through the challenges you're facing and implementing strategies to address them.



I feel sad, down and/or isolated

👉 Sometimes I would just have a meltdown, start crying without warning. Sometimes the littlest things could set me off. 🗣️

Tarek, diagnosed with prostate cancer.

This section can help you find ways to manage feeling down and/or alone.

What's the difference between feeling sad/down and having clinical depression?

We can all feel sad, down, lonely or moody from time to time. The main difference between 'feeling sad/down' and 'clinical depression' is that depression doesn't just go away and the low mood persists. People with clinical depression also tend to feel irritable, a lack of joy and that things take great effort. Their mood affects their relationships and their ability to work and enjoy life. If your feelings are affecting you in this way, it's a really good idea to seek help. Seeing your GP is a good place to start. You can find information about other appropriate professionals in the resource directory included at the end of this booklet.

– Dr Ben Britton



Top Tip: Medicare rebates for seeking help

When a person is referred by a GP, psychiatrist or paediatrician to a psychologist, clinical psychologist, social worker or occupational therapist in mental health, they can claim a rebate. A rebate can be claimed for part of the cost for up to 10 individual sessions and 10 group sessions per calendar year. Rebates are also available for consultations with a psychiatrist, with part or all of the cost covered by Medicare.



Suggestions for dealing with sadness and/or isolation

1. **Pleasant activities.**
2. **Connect with others.**



While our suggestions focus on doing pleasant things, there are many other strategies outlined in this booklet (e.g. thinking techniques) that can also be very helpful in dealing with sadness and isolation. Feel free to pick from these other strategies, because it's about what works for you. Use the flowchart at the beginning of this booklet to identify other strategies that might be helpful.

Suggestion 1: Pleasant activities

✓ **Book it in**

- Schedule pleasant activities into your weekly planner (included at the end of this booklet).
- Aim for a pleasant activity each day, but be prepared to be flexible if something unexpected arises. If you can't do an activity at the planned time, try to get to it before the day ends, or look forward to doing it the next day.

✓ **Take it slowly**

- Start simply and increase your activity gradually.
- Start with simple activities, then gradually include those that require more energy and time.

✓ **Enjoy yourself**

- Do what you enjoy. Schedule those activities that you've enjoyed before or think you'll enjoy. Don't be discouraged if you don't enjoy an activity as much as you did before. With perseverance, the pleasure you'd found before should eventually overcome your mood.

✓ **Include other people**

- You might find your activities much more enjoyable if you include others.
- Let others introduce you to new activities. This will also help to reduce your sense of isolation.

✓ Be inspired

Take a look at this list of activities for inspiration:

- Do a crossword or another type of puzzle.
- Cook your favourite dish or something new.
- Browse the Internet.
- Visit your local library.
- Read a book, magazine or newspaper.
- Listen to music, the radio or an audiobook.
- Watch a DVD or go to the movies.
- Play with your pets and/or kids or grandkids.
- Have a relaxing bath.
- Write a letter or email to someone you care about.
- Roam the neighbourhood and pick flowers or take photos of the scenery.
- Play a solo or group card game.
- Go to the beach or local pool.
- Browse an art gallery, museum or marketplace.



Suggestion 2: Connect with others

Connecting with others can feel like a real effort if you're feeling especially low, but it can make a huge positive difference to your mood and provide you with the support you need.

✓ Book it in

- Schedule it into your weekly planner (included at the end of this booklet).
- Aim for a social experience each day, but be flexible if something unexpected arises.
- If you can't do it at the planned time, try to get to it before the day ends or look forward to doing it the next day.

✓ Accept invitations

- Accept social invitations. At least sometimes, even if it's the last thing you feel like doing, you might enjoy yourself more than you expected to.

✓ Enjoy yourself

- Do what you enjoy. Invite someone to join you in your activities.
- Involve someone in the pleasant activities we've referred to previously, or in exercise, which we cover in the **'I feel unmotivated or low on energy'** section in this booklet.

✓ Be inspired

Try this list of activities for further inspiration:

- Call up a friend for a chat.
- Have a cuppa with your partner, other family member or a friend.
- Join a community centre that hosts activities such as yoga, aerobics, tai chi, walking or dancing groups, or a gym.
- Join a support group for people living with cancer (plenty involve partners also). If you're interested in finding a support group, call the Cancer Council on 13 11 20 or read the **'we need more emotional support'** section in the **Getting the Support You Need** booklet.
- Arrange a DVD or movie night.

✓ Accept help

Accept help offered by family and friends. The ways they can help may include:

- Having a good, relaxing time with you, without discussing your concerns.
- Listening when you do want to discuss your concerns, without trying to come up with solutions or make things better.
- Driving you to, and being company at, appointments, preparing meals, helping with housework, grocery shopping, doing school drop-offs and pick-ups for your kids, getting you books and DVDs, researching services for you... the list goes on!
- Giving others updates on your progress, passing along messages and screening your calls.

What others say about dealing with feelings of sadness and isolation

👍👍 You really have to be able to have a good laugh and a good time whenever you can when you're going through all of this. 🗨️🗨️

Ben, diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

👍👍 I was terrified about fronting up to a support group. I kind of expected people to push you into sharing your deepest and darkest fears and everyone sitting there, looking miserable. I'm really glad I went though; the people there were very supportive. You could talk or listen; it didn't matter. 🗨️🗨️

Paul, diagnosed with prostate cancer.

👍👍 I put together a list of things that my friends and family could do to help. They felt better, because they really wanted to help and now they knew exactly what to do and that I'd definitely appreciate it. I felt better, of course, because I was getting exactly what I needed. It was a win-win for all of us. 🗨️🗨️

Olivia, diagnosed with breast cancer.

How dealing with feelings of sadness and isolation can help

– What the experts have to say

Pleasant activities

A low mood can cause you to lose energy, motivation, interest and pleasure in doing things that you usually enjoy. This can then make feelings of sadness and isolation worse, resulting in a cycle of lower mood and even less energy, motivation, interest and pleasure.

Fortunately, enjoyable and stimulating activities can interrupt this cycle. Pleasant activities engage the pleasure centres of the brain, triggering the release of endorphins that lift mood and help suppress painful emotions. But you have to work at it, increasing your activity bit by bit, to end the cycle for good.

Connecting with others

You may not feel like socialising when you're feeling low, but spending too much time alone can make you feel disconnected from the world, making it harder to bounce back. Connecting with friends and family can increase confidence, enhance wellbeing, reduce tension, increase motivation and create opportunities for participating in enjoyable activities.

Seeking support through a cancer-specific support group reinforces that you're not alone and gives you a forum for talking about specific concerns related to what you're experiencing. If a support group doesn't appeal to you, call the Cancer Council on 13 11 20 and ask about their one-on-one peer support program, Cancer Connect.

– Dr Ben Britton



Key Points: Dealing with sadness and isolation

1. Spending time on enjoyable activities often improves your mood.
2. Spending time with others can increase your sense of connection and lift your mood.
3. Scheduling daily pleasant activities or time with others is a great way to ensure you make the time for such activities.



I feel unmotivated or low on energy

👍👍 Right after I was diagnosed, I just didn't have the urge or motivation to get out of bed. When I forced myself up, to have a shower or brush my teeth, it just felt like too much. I've gotten much better over time and I have a lot more energy, but I had a hard time of it to begin with. 🙏🙏

Vaughan, diagnosed with melanoma.

This section provides tips to manage fatigue, low energy and lack of motivation.

Suggestions for dealing with low motivation or energy

1. Engage in physical **exercise**.
2. **Healthy eating**.



While these suggestions focus on exercising and eating well, there are many other strategies outlined in this booklet (e.g. relaxation techniques, pleasant activities and practising good sleep hygiene) that can help increase motivation and energy. Feel free to pick from these other strategies, because it's about what works for you. Use the flowchart at the beginning of this booklet to identify other strategies that might be helpful.

Suggestion 1: Engage in physical exercise

Discuss any exercise activities you'd like to do with your GP or oncologist before you begin. It's crucial you don't push your body too hard or do anything that may harm you. The following suggestions are general exercise guidelines that are usually appropriate for people with cancer.

✓ Book it in

- Schedule it in your planner (included at the end of this booklet) on five days of the week, but prepare to be flexible if you're not up to it on all of those days or if something unexpected arises.
- If you can't do it at the planned time, try and get to it before the day's end, even if that means shortening the activity. Otherwise, focus on doing it the next day.

✓ Take it slowly

- Increase your exercise gradually. If you start a form of exercise and find you really enjoy it, increase the number of times it appears in your schedule slowly – you don't want to stop enjoying it, or harm yourself, by overdoing it.
- You might need to begin with only five minutes of exercise if you're unwell. Any start is a good one, so don't be discouraged by this – you can gradually increase it as you start to feel better.

✓ Enjoy yourself

- Do what you **enjoy**. Plan activities you enjoy or think you'll find satisfying and/or stimulating. Don't be discouraged if you don't enjoy an activity as much as you did before. With perseverance, the pleasure you'd found before should eventually overcome your mood.

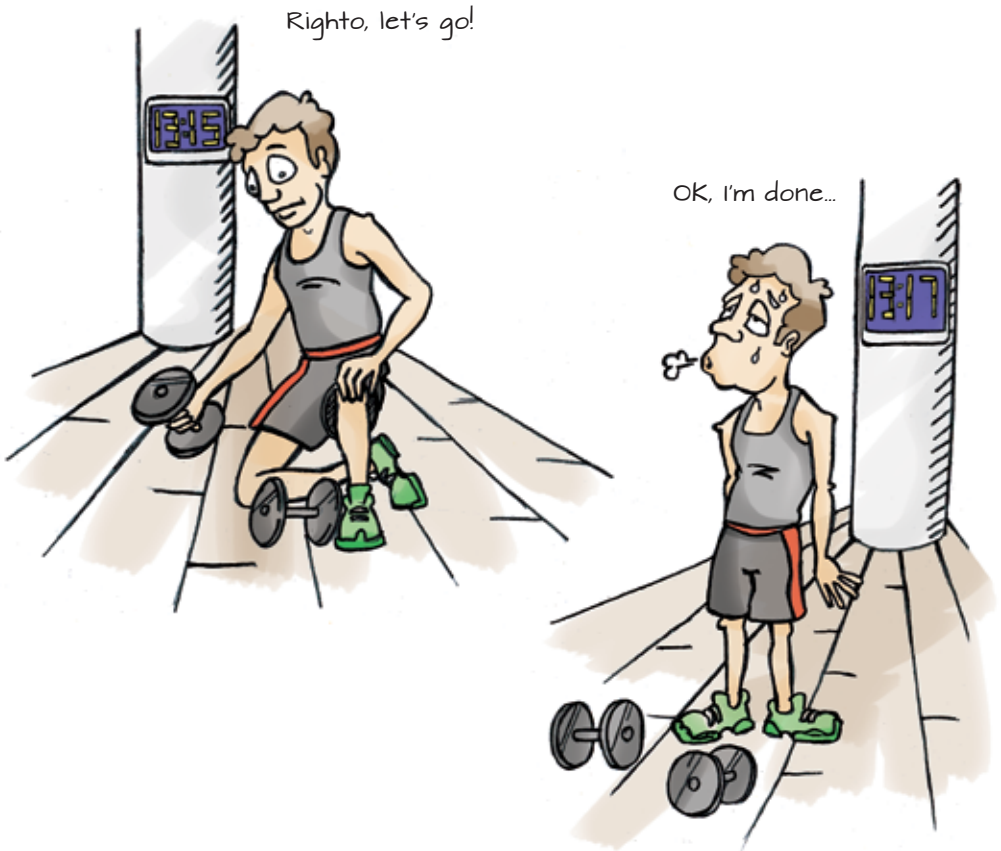
✓ Include other people

- You may find including someone else makes your activities more enjoyable and reduces your sense of isolation.
- Others may even introduce you to new activities you hadn't thought of.

✓ Be inspired

Take a look at this list of activities for inspiration:

- Swimming
- Bike riding
- Cycling at the gym
- Jogging
- Walking
- Resistance/strength training – pulling or pushing weights with arms and legs, which is usually done at the gym, but can be done with objects at home.



Suggestion 2: Healthy eating

Before you make any dietary changes, discuss them with your GP, dietitian, or oncologist. It's crucial that you don't start eating foods that could interfere with your treatment or exacerbate any side effects or symptoms. The following suggestions are general healthy eating guidelines that are usually appropriate for people with cancer.

✓ Be prepared

- Schedule food related activities (e.g. grocery shopping, cooking) into your weekly planner (included at the end of this booklet).
- Get in the habit of preparing very simple meals. A good example of a very simple, but healthy and nutritious meal, is baked beans on wholemeal toast with spinach and cherry tomatoes (takes only five to 10 minutes to prepare).
- Prepare meals in advance. If you're having a good day, cook large portions of food and freeze them. If you tend to feel good in the morning, prepare dinner then.

✓ Use available help

- Do your grocery shopping online and have it delivered to your home. Coles (www.colesonline.com.au) and Woolworths (www.woolworthsonline.com.au) deliver to numerous areas in all States and Territories, while Only Australian Groceries (www.onlyoz.com.au) deliver exclusively Australian-made products to anywhere in the country.
- Eat home-delivered or frozen meals. If you simply don't have the energy to prepare meals and don't have help with preparing them, eating these kinds of convenient meals is far better than not eating at all.
- Possible options include: Meals on Wheels (www.mealsonwheels.org.au), Jenny Craig at Home (www.jennydirect.com.au, 1300 858 198), and Lite n' Easy (www.liteneasy.com.au, 13 15 12). Check their websites or call to see if they deliver to your area.
- Ask for help from your partner, other family or friends in preparing meals and accept help when it's offered.

✓ Consider supplements

- Using vitamin/mineral supplements. These cannot replace a healthy diet, but can be helpful when you need to improve your nutrition. Some nutrients are toxic in high doses (such as vitamins A, D and E), so check with your GP or a dietitian before deciding on a supplement. Dietitians work in hospitals and private practice and can also be found via www.daa.asn.au or by calling 1800 812 942.

Look at the following table for more specific ideas about food to help boost your motivation, energy levels and mood.

Eating to boost motivation, energy levels and mood	
Suggestion	What 'a serve' means
Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two serves of fruit a day.• Five serves of vegetables a day.• Eat a variety of different fruits and vegetables.• They are best eaten fresh and whole.• Eat both raw and cooked vegetables. Ideas for eating more fruit and vegetables: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eat fruit as a substitute for sweet treats.• Try out a new fruit every week.• Include vegetables in your lunchtime meal.• Use frozen vegetables for greater convenience.• Add extra portions of vegetables to your recipes.	What is 'a serve' of vegetables? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ cup (75g) cooked vegetables or legumes (e.g. lentils, beans)• 1 medium potato• 1 cup raw vegetables What is 'a serve' of fruit? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 medium piece (e.g. apple)• 2 small pieces (e.g. apricots)• 1 cup chopped fruit• ½ cup (125ml) fruit juice• 1 ½ tablespoons sultanas• 4 dried apricot halves

Eating to boost motivation, energy levels and mood

Suggestion	What 'a serve' means
<p>Eat foods high in dietary fibre:</p> <p>Wholegrain cereals, seeds, nuts, breads, fruit, vegetables and legumes beans, peas and lentils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two serves of wholegrain or wholemeal foods a day OR • Half of your daily serves of cereals and breads to be wholegrain or wholemeal selections. 	<p>What is 'a serve' of cereal or bread?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1½ cups breakfast cereal • ½ cup untoasted muesli • 1 cup cooked porridge • 2 slices of bread • 1 medium bread roll • 1 cup cooked rice, noodles or pasta <p>What is 'a serve' of seeds or nuts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¼ cup sesame seeds or sunflower seeds • ⅓ cup nuts (almonds or peanuts)
<p>Eat dairy foods (cheese, milk, yoghurt):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three serves a day. • Consume reduced/low fat varieties of dairy foods when weight loss is a concern. • Limit your intake of butter and cream, as they are high in saturated fat. 	<p>What is 'a serve' of dairy food?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45g cheddar cheese • 275ml skim milk • 160g natural low fat yoghurt
<p>Eat fresh (unprocessed) red meat (beef, pork, lamb, veal):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat a moderate amount (65–100g cooked) three to four times a week. • Select lean cuts of meat. • Limit or avoid intake of processed meats, as they are high in salt and fat. • Limit your intake of charred or burnt meat. <p>What if I don't eat red meat?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat two small eggs, 65–100g cooked chicken or 150g cooked fish fillet. • Select lean cuts of chicken and remove the skin. 	<p>What is 'a moderate amount'?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 slices roast meat • ½ cup lean mince • 2 small chops <p>What are processed meats?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ham • Bacon • Sausages • Frankfurts • Salami

Eating to boost motivation, energy levels and mood

Suggestion	What 'a serve' means
<p>Eat foods high in omega-3 fatty acids:</p> <p>Canned tuna, salmon, sardines and mackerel, oily fresh fish (Atlantic salmon, swordfish, gemfish and Spanish mackerel) and plant foods and oils (leafy vegetables, canola margarine, canola oil, linseeds, linseed/ flaxseed oil, soybeans, soybean oil, walnuts and walnut oil).</p> <p>Ideas for eating foods high in omega-3 fatty acids:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprinkle linseeds over your breakfast cereal. • Choose soy and linseed bread. • Use linseeds and/or walnuts in homemade breads, muffins and cakes. • Bake pears or apples stuffed with sultanas and walnuts. • Put soybeans in your blender and make a dip. • Toss canned fish through a large salad. • Bake a spinach pie. • Add soybeans to soups, casseroles and stews. • Bake a homemade seafood pizza. • Add fish or seafood to mixed dishes, such as soups, pastas, stews, curries and casseroles. • Make fish cakes with canned fish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2–3 serves a week of most fish or seafood OR • 1 serve a week of shark (flake) or billfish (marlin and swordfish/ broadbill) and no other fish for the week • 1 serve of fish or seafood = 150g

Adapted from Dept. of Health and Family Services (1998); Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (2004, 2006) and National Health and Medical Research Council (2003, 2006).

What others say about dealing with low motivation and energy

👍👍 I think we feel a lot better since we started making sure we had proper, regular meals. 🗨️

Ahmed, diagnosed with prostate cancer.

👍👍 I was feeling tired and sluggish in the afternoons, but found that some exercise each morning, even if it was just a short walk down the street to get the newspaper, really helped me have more energy later in the day. 🗨️

Simone, diagnosed with breast cancer.

How dealing with low motivation and energy can help – What the experts have to say



Exercise

Exercise can help boost motivation, energy levels and mood in many ways.

- ✓ Increased fitness is associated with a greater sense of wellbeing; possibly due to exercise increasing the number of endorphins in the brain (chemical messengers with mood-lifting qualities).
- ✓ Exercise can distract you from your worries and block out negative thoughts.
- ✓ Exercising with others can increase your social contact, which can bolster mood, energy and motivation.
- ✓ Research shows that physical activity can help alleviate chemotherapy side effects.

Healthy eating

Healthy eating can play a crucial role in maintaining physical and mental health.

- ✓ It's associated with a greater sense of wellbeing.
- ✓ It helps you deal with the strains of being unwell and helps you cope with treatment.
- ✓ Poultry, lean meat and fish (which are high in protein) are made up of amino acids, like tryptophan. Tryptophan enables the brain to produce serotonin, which is a chemical messenger that contributes to a sense of wellbeing.

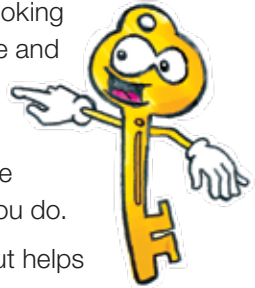
Additional information about exercise and healthy eating

For more advice on becoming more active with exercise, finding an exercise physiologist, healthy eating, making dietary changes or arranging home delivered groceries or meals, refer to the resource directory included at the end of this booklet. Remember to discuss any exercise and dietary changes you are considering with your GP or oncologist before making them.

– **Dr Ben Britton**

Key Points: Dealing with low motivation and energy

1. Boosting your energy and motivation is tied to looking after yourself, specifically getting regular exercise and eating well.
2. Planning exercise, doing activities you enjoy and exercising with a family member or friend are great ways to increase the amount of exercise you do.
3. Eating well involves planning and preparation, but helps you deal with the strains of illness and caregiving.
4. Any changes in your exercise habits and diet should be discussed with your health care team before you begin.



I feel overwhelmed by my situation

👤👤 There was just so much going on and I had to keep the home going as well as getting him (husband Seth) to all of his appointments. It can really get on top of you, but you don't want to say anything because you're not the one who is sick. 🧠🧠

Wendy, wife of Seth, diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

👤👤 It's always nice to know that you're not going crazy! It's okay to be teary or it's okay to be angry or it's okay to be, you know, curled up in the foetal position on the floor for an hour and you're really not having a mental breakdown! It's all perfectly normal! 🧠🧠

Anica, diagnosed with breast cancer.

Sometimes emotions can feel extremely overwhelming, but experiencing them doesn't mean you're 'going off the deep end'. It simply means you're facing a tough time. The aim of this section is to help you find ways to manage feeling overwhelmed.

Suggestions for dealing with feeling overwhelmed

1. **Changing your self-talk.**
2. **Being assertive.**
3. **Problem solving.**



While our suggested strategies focus on using different ways of thinking, there are many other strategies outlined in this booklet (e.g. relaxation techniques, pleasant activities and exercise) that can also be very helpful in dealing with worries. Feel free to pick from these other strategies, because it's about what works for you. Use the flowchart at the beginning of this booklet to identify other helpful strategies.

Suggestion 1: Changing your self-talk

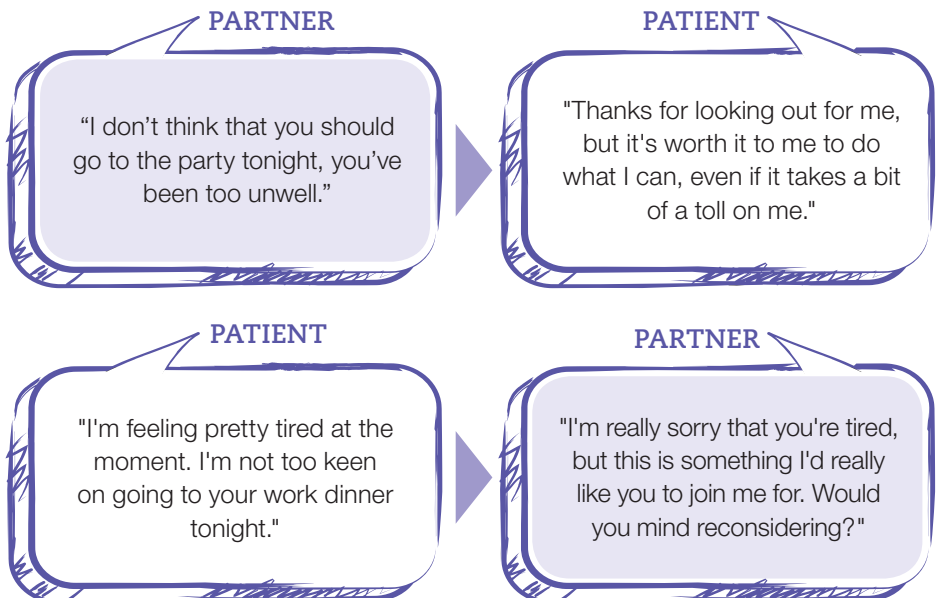
Changing self-talk helps people become aware of unhelpful thoughts that contribute to their worry and negative feelings, and to challenge them with more helpful thoughts. It allows worries and problems to be approached with a clearer mind so they can be dealt with, rather than just worried about.

The steps to follow for changing your self-talk are described in the ***'I feel worried or uncertain'*** section of this booklet.

Suggestion 2: Be assertive

Being assertive means stating clearly what you want or think, allowing you to gain more control over the way you handle situations. For instance, there will be times when you don't want to see visitors, talk on the phone, accept offers of help or talk about your thoughts, worries or feelings. You'll want to handle your situation as you wish. By assertively and courteously saying "no", you can take control and reduce the chance that you'll end up feeling overwhelmed.

Assertive communication – which is direct and respectful – helps you get your point across. Being assertive means expressing yourself effectively and standing up for your point of view, while respecting the rights of others. Here are some examples:



FACT: Standing up for yourself doesn't mean you're being difficult, denying other people their rights, or that you don't care about others.



If you find it difficult to be assertive, think about other ways of getting your message across, such as asking your partner to speak for you and/or putting it in writing if you feel uncomfortable in a face-to-face setting.

If you're worried you might be seen to be challenging someone's opinion or questioning their judgement, try 'softening' phrases, such as:

"That seems like a good way to go, but it would also be good to look at other options you might know of..."

"I was thinking about...; what do you think?"

"I'd prefer to do it this way, but it's important for me to have your support."

FACT: Sometimes when you're assertive, especially when those close to you aren't used to it, others may get upset. This doesn't mean that you've done something wrong.



If you need a bit more confidence in being assertive, read the following **Bill of Assertive Rights**, which says that you have every right to communicate your thoughts, feelings, needs and opinions directly and honestly to others. It also reminds you that you have the right to say "**no**", without feeling guilty.

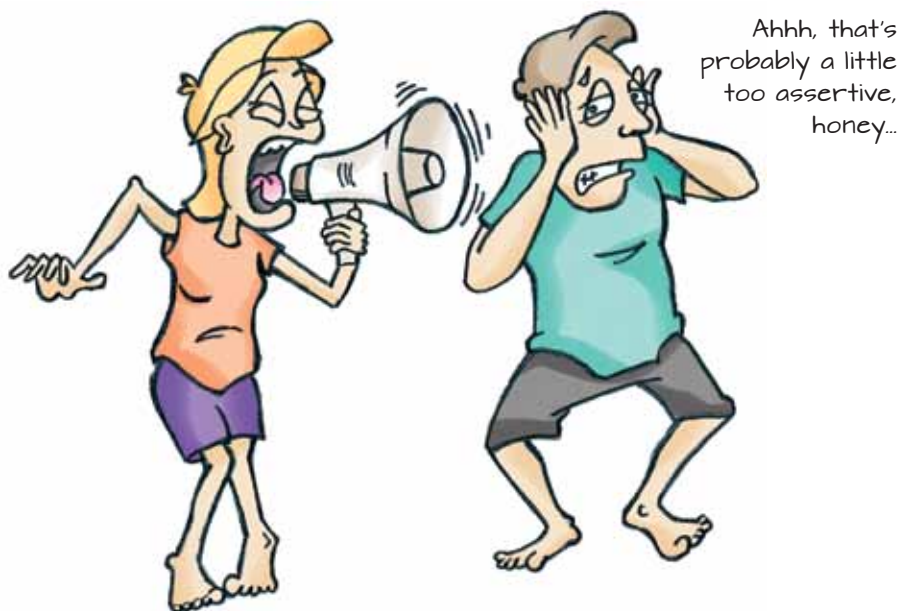
Top Tip: The *Getting What You Need From Your Health Care Team* booklet contains numerous strategies for being assertive with members of your health care team. Being assertive allows you to respectfully get your message across, so that you get all the information you need and everybody's care needs are met.



A Bill of Assertive Rights

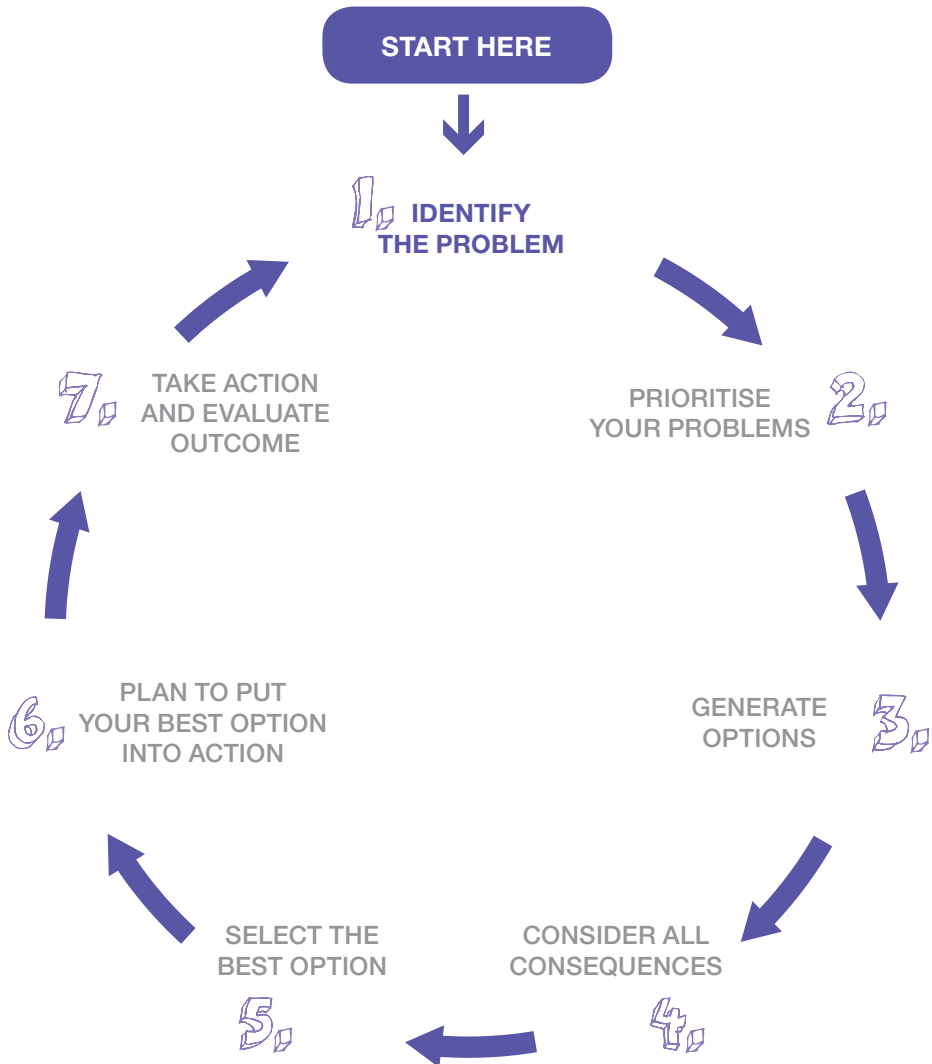
1. You have the right to judge your own behaviour, thoughts and emotions and to take responsibility for their initiation and consequences upon yourself.
2. You have the right to offer no reasons or excuses for justifying your behaviour.
3. You have the right to judge if you are responsible for finding solutions to other people's problems.
4. You have the right to change your mind.
5. You have the right to make mistakes – and be responsible for them.
6. You have the right to say: "I don't know."
7. You have the right to be independent of the goodwill of others before coping with them.
8. You have the right to be illogical in making decisions.
9. You have the right to say: "I don't understand."

From Smith (1975).



Suggestion 3: Problem solving

When overwhelmed by a problem, it can be hard to know what to do about it, which may overwhelm you more and make problem solving more difficult. A systematic approach to problem solving, such as the one in the diagram below, may help. Refer to the ***‘I feel worried or uncertain’*** section in this booklet for more detail.



What others say about using these suggestions for dealing with feeling overwhelmed

👍👍 I was overwhelmed by people ringing up all the time and wanting to visit, but I found I couldn't say 'no' and it was totally getting on top of me. Then I read in the *Coping-Together* booklet that it's okay to tell people 'No, I don't want you to come around' and to explain to them why. When I did tell them how I felt, they all said 'We understand'. 🗨️🗨️
Rosemary, wife of Christopher, diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

👍👍 I remember days of not wanting to get out of bed and thinking that my life had somehow become this horrible hell of working, caring, doctors' appointments, and trying to find time for the kids. But then I started challenging those thoughts, my life wasn't hell, I was just having a bad day, not even a bad day, a bad moment. Once I stopped telling myself everything was bad, I actually could find satisfaction in my many roles and I started to feel more on top of things. 🗨️🗨️
Carmen, wife of Nicolas, diagnosed with melanoma.

Why using these strategies can help – What the experts have to say

Changing your Self-Talk

Everyone encounters worrying situations and what we say to ourselves (self-talk) about them has a direct impact on how we feel. Negative thoughts like 'things will never improve' are often far more negative than they should be. We're not suggesting you should simply 'be positive', but being optimistic, without denying that cancer is worth worrying about, can be helpful.

Completely avoiding negative thoughts or feelings about cancer is generally ineffective. What you are aiming for is realistic self-talk that acknowledges the impact that cancer has had on your life, but also acknowledges that you have the capacity to deal with it.



Being assertive

When you're feeling overwhelmed, it can be challenging to be assertive and stand up for yourself. In this situation, you might find that your needs and rights are being neglected. Assertive, direct and respectful communication gives you the best chance of getting your point across.

Problem solving

Because we solve problems every day, we usually don't think about how we actually do it. Cancer brings many new problems to deal with, so it's useful to think about different ways to approach problem solving.

Problem solving via the step-by-step process we suggest can help you:

- ✓ Work out exactly what you're trying to solve.
- ✓ Break down overwhelming problems into smaller, more solvable problems.
- ✓ Provide a sound basis for important decision making.
- ✓ Feel in control of what you're facing, and less anxious about problems.

– **Associate Professor Jane Turner**

Key Points: Dealing with feeling overwhelmed

1. Negative self-talk can add to the feeling of being overwhelmed. Aim to establish realistic self-talk that acknowledges your ability to deal with stressful situations.
2. Use assertive communication to make sure your needs are clearly communicated.
3. Problem solving is an active way of thinking through challenges you're facing, breaking them down into manageable issues, and implementing strategies to address them.



I'm having difficulties sleeping

👤 When you're trying to get to sleep and you can't, it is such a frustrating experience and it's only made harder by how agitated you become. I found it hard to sleep because of all the negative thoughts I'd have going through my mind that I didn't want to think about during the day. Then, all I'd think about was how angry I was that I couldn't sleep. ⚡

Ron, diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

Finding it hard to sleep (referred to as *insomnia*) is common when people are experiencing a particularly stressful time in their lives. People tend to find that their sleeping troubles start with lying awake at night, thinking about their problems. Once you start worrying about not being able to fall asleep, you can find yourself in a vicious circle that's hard to break.

Suggestions for improving your sleep at night

1. What you **do** when you **wake up in the morning**.
2. **Daytime routines**.
3. **Before going to bed**.
4. **Preparing** for sleep.
5. If you **can't get to sleep**.



While our suggestions focus on practising good sleep hygiene, there are many other strategies outlined in this booklet (e.g. relaxation and thinking techniques, pleasant activities and exercise) that can also be very helpful in improving your sleep. Feel free to pick from these other strategies, because it's about what works for you. Use the flowchart at the beginning of this booklet to identify other strategies that might be helpful.

Suggestion 1: When you wake up in the morning

- ✓ Get out of bed as soon as you wake up. Resist any temptation you may have to return to sleep.
- ✓ Try to wake up at roughly the same time each morning. 7–7.30am tends to be a good time. Schedule your preferred waking time into your weekly planner (included at the end of this booklet).
- ✓ Some fresh air and a little physical activity might help get you going.

Suggestion 2: Daytime routines

- ✓ Resist the temptation to take a nap. If you nap, you're likely to be less tired when you go to bed at night.
- ✓ If you tend to worry about things at night, schedule time into your day for problem solving. See the problem solving exercise in the **'I feel worried or uncertain'** section in this booklet.
- ✓ Keep a diary to document when you go to bed, when you get to sleep, and any occasions that you wake up.
- ✓ Use your diary to discuss your sleep-wake patterns with your GP, if your difficulties persist.
- ✓ Keep active by exercising or doing pleasant activities (see the **'I feel unmotivated or low on energy'** section for suggestion on exercises and **'I feel sad, down and/or isolated'** for pleasant activities ideas).
- ✓ Avoid caffeinated drinks and other stimulants (e.g. coffee, strong tea, cocoa, cola or energy drinks) after 4pm. Try to limit your consumption of caffeinated drinks to two cups per day.

FACT: Many people have TVs in the bedroom and use it as a way to fall asleep – but this is a bad idea. Television can be very stimulating and it tends to keep people awake for longer.



Suggestion 3: Before going to bed

- ✓ Avoid getting into bed too early, as it's much harder to get into a deep sleep. 10–10.30pm tends to be a good time.
- ✓ Avoid doing your 'getting ready for bed jobs', such as brushing your teeth and washing your face, right before you go to bed, as they can make you feel too alert. Get them done early.
- ✓ Physical activity can improve your sleep, but don't do rigorous exercise late in the evening.
- ✓ Don't get into bed hungry or with a full bladder.
- ✓ Give yourself time to relax before getting into bed. If you're doing chores, study or work at night, stop at least 30 minutes before bedtime and do something calming, such as reading or using a relaxation technique discussed in the '***I feel tense, angry and/or stressed***' section of this booklet.
- ✓ Use your bed for sleep and sex only, so that you link your bed with sleep.
- ✓ Avoid using alcohol as a means of getting to sleep. The process of alcohol breaking down in the body causes less deep sleep and repeated waking.
- ✓ Avoid smoking in the 1–2 hours before going to bed, as smoking stimulates your nervous system.

Suggestion 4: Preparing for sleep

- ✓ Make your bedroom as cool (but not cold), quiet and dim as possible.
- ✓ Use as few blankets and heated blankets as possible, as heat makes it harder to achieve a deep sleep.

Top Tip: Prepare yourself and your bedroom for sleep.

Try a light snack (e.g. warm milk, banana, cheese) and do some relaxation to unwind. To prepare your room, reduce noise and light, and make sure you have all you need to be comfortable (e.g. glass of water).



Suggestion 5: If you can't get to sleep

- ✓ Get out of bed if you've been trying to get to sleep for as long as 15–20 minutes. If you stay in bed when you're feeling anxious and restless, you're unlikely to get to sleep.
- ✓ Spend your time out of bed doing something quiet and pre-occupying, such as reading, having a bath, playing cards or knitting. If your mind is quite active or you're worrying a lot, it could help to focus on something else, like a TV show or a crossword puzzle. Being distracted from your thoughts can make it easier to relax and become sleepy.
- ✓ When you become tired again, go back to bed.
- ✓ If you try getting to sleep for another 15–20 minutes and still can't, get out of bed again. Repeat this process until you're able to fall asleep soon after returning to bed.



I know it's late, but I just can't seem to get to sleep.

What others say about the benefits of improving their sleep

👤 When I was having trouble sleeping I spoke with my GP and I found her advice of avoiding naps later in the afternoon really helped. 🙌
Gloria, diagnosed with breast cancer.

👤 Right at the beginning of all of this I would lie awake most nights thinking about the cancer. Once I figured out how I could get to sleep better, I still worried, but I dealt with it during the day instead. 🙌
Kevin, husband of Rita, diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

How improving your sleep helps – What the experts have to say



Sleeping well each night is vital for good physical and emotional health, as the body and mind need this break in activity to rest, recover and revitalise at the end of the day. While we sleep, the body produces chemicals that allow it to repair and grow and the immune system does more work to fight illness and infection. In a resting state, our emotions and moods become more balanced.

Sleeping well isn't necessarily about getting a long sleep; it's more about getting good quality sleep. Good quality sleep involves having deep sleep or REM (dream) sleep, which we usually fall into during the first five hours. If you don't get enough of this good quality sleep, you can experience:

- ✓ Irritability and/or low mood;
- ✓ Fatigue and lack of energy during the day;
- ✓ Poor concentration;
- ✓ Bone and muscle aches and pains; and/or
- ✓ Less effective immune system functioning.

Even if you only get four to five hours sleep each night, you can still achieve the same amount of deep or REM sleep as someone who gets eight to 10 hours sleep.

Additional information about sleeping well

If you try these strategies and aren't having any success in sleeping better, see your GP to explore further options.

– **Dr Ben Britton**

Key Points: Improving your sleep

1. Getting adequate rest is essential for your physical and emotional wellbeing.
2. There are things you can do throughout the day and night that will help you prepare for a good night's sleep.
3. If you're having trouble sleeping, get out of bed until you feel tired enough to fall asleep quickly.



I need more help or information resources

This directory provides access details for resources or services that offer information, advice, referral, support, treatment or home services to help you deal with your stress and worries.

Medicare rebates for seeking help

When a person is referred by a GP, psychiatrist or paediatrician to a psychologist, clinical psychologist, social worker or occupational therapist in mental health, they're able to claim a rebate for part of the cost for up to 10 individual sessions and 10 group sessions per calendar year. Rebates are also available for consultations with a psychiatrist, with part or all of the cost covered by Medicare. Also, when a person with a chronic medical condition is referred by a GP to a health professional such as a dietitian, exercise physiologist or occupational therapist, they may be eligible to claim a rebate for up to five individual services per calendar year. Your GP can advise on your eligibility.

Some mental health practitioners bulk-bill, so there is **no charge** to pay and no need for a rebate claim.

Seeking help for thoughts about suicide or self-harm

If you're considering suicide or self-harm, either speak with your GP immediately or call one of the following services:

- **24 hour NSW Suicide Prevention and Support Line 1300 133 911**
- **24 hour Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467**
- **Lifeline 13 11 14**

Health Care Professionals

Counsellor	Counsellors provide psychological support. Bear in mind that a person can call themselves a 'counsellor' without any kind of professional qualification.	Most counsellors work in private practice. Go to www.theaca.net.au or www.healthengine.com.au to find an Australian Counselling Association registered counsellor in your area.
Dietitian	Dietitians provide advice about food and nutrition. An oncology dietitian supports and educates patients on nutrition-related matters and can modify diets to help manage cancer during treatment and recovery.	Oncology dietitians work in hospitals and private practice. Go to www.daa.asn.au or call 1800 812 942 to find an accredited practising oncology dietitian in your area. Bowel Cancer Australia also have a Nutritionist Advisor. Go to www.bowelcanceraustralia.org
Exercise Physiologist	These are health professionals who provide services in fitness and exercise.	Go to www.essa.org.au or www.healthengine.com.au for more information about exercise physiologist services.
General Practitioner (GP)	Your GP is the best starting point, as he/she can make a diagnosis, check any medication side effects, discuss available treatment options, develop a Mental Health Care Plan with you, provide treatment or refer you to a mental health professional. Your GP can also arrange a referral to an exercise physiologist or dietitian.	A list of GPs with expertise in treating mental health difficulties is available at www.beyondblue.org.au , or call beyondblue on 1300 224 636.
Mental health Nurse	These are nurses who have specialised in the care of people with mental health difficulties. They work with GPs and psychiatrists to review a person's mental health, monitor medication and provide mental health information.	Mental health nurses usually work in hospitals or community health / mental health services.

Occupational Therapist	Occupational therapists can help people experiencing mental health difficulties to participate in normal, everyday activities. Some are trained in therapies like massage and relaxation.	Most work in State health or welfare services. Go to www.ausot.com.au or www.healthengine.com.au to find an occupational therapist in your area.
Psychiatrist	A psychiatrist is a doctor who has specialised in the field of mental health treatment.	Many psychiatrists work in private practice, but some work for mental health services and hospitals. To find a psychiatrist in your area, go to www.healthengine.com.au . Not all psychiatrists are listed on this website, but it can be a helpful starting point.
Psychologist	A psychologist specialises in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of difficulties like anxiety and depression. Many specialist psychologists have completed advanced training in helping people cope with the emotional impact of cancer.	Psychologists work in private practice and/or community health/mental health services. To find a psychologist in your area, go to www.psychology.org.au or www.healthengine.com.au . Not all psychologists are listed on these websites, but they can be helpful starting points.
Social Worker	Social workers are able to help find ways to effectively manage some of the situations that can trigger or exacerbate problems like anxiety or depression. This might take the form of help with finances, family issues, living arrangements and work stress.	Most work in State health or welfare services, while some work in private practice. Go to www.aasw.asn.au or www.healthengine.com.au to find a social worker in your area. Oncology Social Work Australia (www.oswa.net.au) may also be able to connect you with an oncology social worker.

Support organisations, telephone helplines and websites

Australian National University	A number of websites, available free of charge, designed to support and provide information on a range of issues such as depression, anxiety and stress management.	www.beacon.anu.edu.au www.blueboard.anu.edu.au www.bluepages.anu.edu.au www.depressioNet.org.au www.ecouch.anu.edu.au www.moodgym.anu.edu.au
Australian Psychological Society Referral Line	Referral service to help find a psychologist who best suits your needs.	1800 333 497 www.psychology.org.au
beyondblue	Information on anxiety and depression, available treatments and referral.	1300 224 636 (1300 bb info) www.beyondblue.org.au
Black Dog Institute	Information on depression, available treatments and where to get help.	02 9382 4530 www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
Breast Cancer Network Australia	Information about breast cancer and where to go for help and support.	1800 500 258 www.bcna.org.au
Bowel Cancer Australia	Information about colorectal cancer and where to go for help and support.	02 9923 8269 www.bowelcanceraustralia.org
Cancer Council	Information about cancer and where to go for help and support.	13 11 20 www.cancer.org.au
Carers Australia	Information, support and referral for carers.	1800 242 636 www.carersaustralia.com.au
Coles Online	Online grocery shopping and arrangement of home delivery.	1800 455 400 www.colesonline.com.au
Jenny Craig at Home	Information about accessing home delivered meals.	1300 858 198 www.jennydirect.com.au

Kids Helpline	24-hour telephone and online counselling and support for young people aged 5–25.	1800 551 800 www.kidshelp.com.au
Lifeline	24-hour counselling, information and referral.	13 11 14
Lite n' Easy	Information about accessing home delivered meals.	13 15 12 www.liteneasy.com.au
Meals on Wheels	Information about accessing home delivered meals.	www.mealsonwheels.org.au
Mental Health First Aid	Gives practical advice on how you can provide initial help to someone who has anxiety, is depressed or suicidal.	03 9079 0200 www.mhfa.com.au
Melanoma Patients Australia	Helpline for information about melanoma and support groups.	1300 884 450 www.melanomapatients.org.au
MensLine Australia	24-hour telephone support, information and referral for men.	1300 789 978 www.mensline.org.au
Only Australian Groceries	Online grocery shopping and arrangement of home delivery.	07 3353 5782 www.onlyoz.com.au
Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia	Information about prostate cancer treatments and where to go for help and support.	1800 220 099 www.prostate.org.au
Salvo Care Line	24-hour counselling, information and referral services.	1300 363 622
SANE Australia	For asking questions about mental illness and related topics.	1800 187 263 (1800 18 sane) www.sane.org/helpline/
Woolworths Online	Online grocery shopping and arrangement of home delivery.	1300 666 377 www.woolworthsonline.com.au

Booklet		
beyondblue	Guide for carers – Supporting and caring for a person with depression, anxiety and/or a related disorder: Caring for others, caring for yourself.	Obtained free via the beyondblue information line 1300 224 636 (1300 bb info) or from www.beyondblue.org.au
DVD		
beyondblue	Carers' stories of hope and recovery.	Obtained free via the beyondblue information line 1300 224 636 (1300 bb info) or from www.beyondblue.org.au
Other		
Gymnasiums / Sports Clubs	Most gyms offer a range of classes, like aerobics, and have equipment such as weights. Some also have swimming pools. Gyms also often have instructors who can develop personal fitness plans and help with the motivation required to see the plans through.	Check your local telephone directory or newspaper to see what clubs are available in your area.
Local Council Recreation Centre	Many councils have free or cheap recreation and sport facilities, like swimming pools, tennis courts, walking circuits and skating ramps.	Check with your local council to see what they offer.

Weekly Activity Schedule

Throughout this booklet, we've provided ideas and suggestions for how you can use a weekly planner to help improve how you're thinking and feeling. An example of a completed schedule follows, and a larger schedule for your use is included on the next page.

**At the end of each day, rate how you felt overall that day.
Make 1 = the worst you've ever felt, 10 = the best you've ever felt.**

Time	Monday ___ / ___ / ___	Tuesday ___ / ___ / ___	Wednesday ___ / ___ / ___
7.30am	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed
7.45am	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast
8.00am work days 8.30am free days	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-min walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Shower, get ready	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-min walk
9.00am	<input type="checkbox"/> Shower, get ready	<input type="checkbox"/> Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Shower, get ready
10.00am	<input type="checkbox"/> Coffee with Ellie		<input type="checkbox"/> Crossword
12.00pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch
1.00pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores		<input type="checkbox"/> Return / Borrow library books
3.30pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores		<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores
5.00pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Yoga	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Prepare dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancer Support Group
6.30pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner
7.30pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores
10.30pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed
Mood Rating (from 1–10)			

	Thursday ___ / ___ / ___	Friday ___ / ___ / ___	Saturday ___ / ___ / ___	Sunday ___ / ___ / ___
	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast
	<input type="checkbox"/> Shower, get ready	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-min walk	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-min walk	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-min walk
	<input type="checkbox"/> Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Shower, get ready	<input type="checkbox"/> Shower, get ready	<input type="checkbox"/> Shower, get ready
		<input type="checkbox"/> Grocery shopping with Mum	<input type="checkbox"/> Hire DVDs	<input type="checkbox"/> Crossword
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch
		<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores	<input type="checkbox"/> Bike ride with partner/family	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores
		<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores	<input type="checkbox"/> Call / Email friends/family
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Prepare dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Prepare dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Prepare dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Cook in bulk for freezing
	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores	<input type="checkbox"/> Poker with neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch DVDs	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest / Chores
	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed



Remember to set times for the activities that you add each week and to tick off ☒ each activity as you complete it.

Time	Monday ____/____/____	Tuesday ____/____/____	Wednesday ____/____/____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed
Mood Rating (from 1–10)			

At the end of each day, rate how you felt overall that day.
 Make 1 = the worst you've ever felt, 10 = the best you've ever felt.

	Thursday ____/____/____	Friday ____/____/____	Saturday ____/____/____	Sunday ____/____/____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Get out of bed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed

The best cancer care starts with getting the cancer information you need. Well-informed patients and partners are their own best advocates and invaluable partners for health care providers. **coping together** puts the focus on the patients and their partners, providing the practical information they need to learn new coping skills and build confidence in using them. **coping together** has been put together by a team of researchers and clinicians, including psychologists and nurses, with expertise in helping people cope with cancer.

👤👤 There's a lot of people out there who, as soon as they know they're diagnosed with cancer, they just drop their bundle straight away and they think that's the end. I think something like *Coping -Together* helps you pull through or gives you a guideline of what to do, and that's what is needed. 🙏🙏
Unna, diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

👤👤 Most psychologists would tell you all this stuff, but then actually having it written down so that I can go back to it, so when I'm having a really bad day; it's like okay, what did I do before? I found it easy that I could then go back to the *Coping-Together* booklets and look at it again. 🙏🙏
Harriet, diagnosed with breast cancer.

👤👤 I thought the *Dealing with Stress and Worry* book was good, it had all the feelings you get – frustrated and angry and difficulty sleeping; I went through all of that and I found that *Coping-Together* was a good one. I would have liked to have had that before Carmel started the chemo. 🙏🙏
Harold, husband of Carmel, diagnosed with breast cancer.

