

Managing Relationships Workshops

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Introduction

Everyday in Maggie's Centres our visitors, who are people and their families living with and beyond cancer, seek support for the emotional and practical burden cancer places on relationships, and how to manage relationships is a key theme within most aspects of the existing Maggie's core programme, for example, courses such as "Getting Started", "Where Now?", Managing Stress, support groups and conversations in the drop-in forum with our Cancer Support Specialists.

Service Innovation

A series of standalone workshops focused on specific relationship themes have been developed to complement the existing Maggie's programme and utilise the skills and knowledge already within our health professional teams which include Clinical Psychologists, and Cancer Support Specialists with backgrounds oncology and palliative nursing. A key aim is to swiftly facilitate access to the professional help Maggie's provides for anyone struggling with the impact of cancer on relationships. The themes were identified and prioritised for inclusion in the Workshop series through discussion with Centre Teams and Centre Visitors. The workshops are very simple by design and focus on group discussion and exchange of ideas with other people in a similar situation. Each Maggie's Centre in the UK network of 22 centres will deliver the workshops from December 2018 to June 2019, and the impact is being evaluated. The workshops leaders have specialist skills in group facilitation so able to provide a safe environment for open discussion.

Workshop format

The workshop is opened by a vignette that captures the theme, the theme is discussed, experiences exchanged, and the workshop closes with a summary of 'Ideas, Hints and Tips for Managing Relationships' that the participants will be invited to tailor to their personal circumstance and commit to transferring the ideas and strategies gained through the workshop into their daily life. The workshop titles are adaptable, again by design, so Centres can choose different target participants depending on the programme priorities or other Centre reasons. For example, the 'Managing Relationships when your body has changed' workshop can be targeted at people following complex reconstructive surgery or men with Pelvic Radiation Disease.



Workshop themes and aims

Managing relationships when life is full of uncertainty

How to manage the challenges a relationship faces when it feels like you are living in 'limbo', waiting for scan results, decisions about treatment, news about changes to your cancer or whether it has come back. Also, living with the uncertainty of work and finances.

Relationships when you and your body has changed

How to manage the physical and emotional challenges placed on relationships when your body, and body-image, have changed due to your cancer and treatments.

Supporting and communicating with children

How to support and talk with children at different ages when someone special has cancer; helping them to find their natural resilience, bounce back and still thrive in school and friendships despite unavoidable family stress.

Partnering your healthcare team

How to build a comfortable working relationship with your hospital medical team and GP so you can communicate effectively and seek the support and information you need.

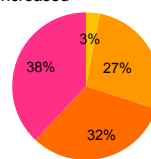
Starting a new relationships

How to navigate the highs and lows of a new relationship at any stage of cancer. Answering questions like, "When should I tell them about my cancer, first date, three months in?", "Should I show them my scars or just let them discover them?"

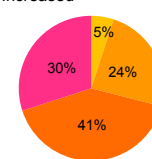
Feedback so far

Evaluation forms for 39 participants across 5 workshops have been analysed to give an early indication of how the workshops are being received. More comprehensive results will be provided when the pilot is complete.

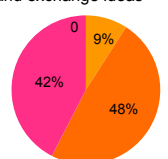
Understanding about managing relationships and understanding has increased



My confidence in managing relationships and uncertainty has increased



The chance to talk with people in similar situation and exchange ideas



■ Not at all ■ A little
■ Very Much ■ Significantly

What people valued most?

- Space to share experiences
- Listening to others
- Open and supportive atmosphere

What were the main 'take away' messages for everyday life?

- Cultivate Self-Confidence
- Have more self-compassion
- Openness
- Pause and breath

Open feedback comments

- “Really enlightening and reassuring”
- “Hearing others speak and speaking to myself”
- “Move forward with confidence”
- “Supportive and friendly atmosphere”
- “Pause, breath out, let my mind settle and be kinder to myself”

92% of the participants said they would recommend Manage Relationships Workshops to other people with cancer and their families

What other parts of Maggie's will they choose as a next step following the workshop?

- Yoga
- Mindfulness
- Relaxation
- One to one psychological support

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