

# **Bupa emotional support counselling offer to people living with cancer**

## **What is Bupa emotional support counselling?**

Macmillan and BUPA are working in partnership to provide free counselling to people with cancer who are struggling cope emotionally and need support. The new partnership offers people with high levels of emotional need as a result of their cancer experience up to six sessions of free one-on-one counselling over the phone or video call from a qualified BUPA counsellor.

## **How we are hoping you can help**

We are trying to increase the number of people with cancer we refer to Bupa for counselling support. To do this we are asking that you share details with health and social care professionals in your wider networks, to ensure they are aware of the service and know how to refer people in the service who they think will benefit from counselling support.

## **How did this service offer come about?**

This service offer was fast tracked last year in response to Covid-19, as we knew people with cancer were experience heightened levels of uncertainty, anxiety and depression. The service initially launched as a pilot in August 2020, where our focus was on developing an effective referral process via MSL, and ensuring the service helped the people who used it. In January Macmillan's Innovation Board agreed to extend the service by another 12 months and asked that we increase the number of people we refer to Bupa for support.

## **How can Bupa counselling help people living with cancer?**

The service could help improve someone's quality of life by:

- Providing personalised support that is tailored to their circumstances
- Reducing the sense of fear, anxiety and/or depression that they might be feeling
- Improving how they cope emotionally with living with or beyond cancer
- Helping them feel empowered to self-manage
- Increasing their confidence and motivation

By the end of January 2021 over 600 people had been referred by MSL to Bupa for support. Early evidence showed people who had completed a course of sessions have seen their levels of anxiety and/or depression reduce.

## **How does the service work?**

Anyone affected by cancer, who is feeling anxious, depressed or in need of someone to talk to should call the Macmillan Support Line today on 0808 808 00 00 and ask about the Bupa service. If a health or social care professional thinks someone they are supporting would benefit from this support, they should ask that person to call our support line, rather than make a referral.

If someone living with cancer is referred to Bupa for counselling support, they will first receive an initial assessment to make sure the service is suitable. If it is, they will then receive up to six counselling sessions over the phone or via video call from a counsellor. Sessions usually last up to an hour and happen every two weeks, but this is flexible around someone's needs and availability.

## **Who can use the Bupa wellbeing counselling service?**

This free counselling support is for anyone who has or has had cancer and are experiencing high level emotional needs such as anxiety and depression, and meets the following requirements:

- They are a person living with cancer
- They are 18 years or over.
- They are struggling emotionally with, and as a result of their cancer journey.
- Their top current *identified* need is mental wellbeing/emotional support
- They are mentally, physically and socially able to engage in the process
- They are not currently receiving therapy elsewhere for mental health needs.
- Their usual daily functioning is being affected
- They are expressing or describing symptoms of anxiety, depression, irritability etc
- They are struggling to 'cope' or 'manage' and things in life are becoming increasingly difficult or challenging.

## **We want as many people with cancer to benefit from this support as possible**

Our emotional support counselling service in partnership with Bupa is available to anyone in the UK who is living with cancer, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, gender, sexual orientation or religion & belief.

We want everyone to be able to access this service. Please can you make health and social care professionals in your wider network aware of this service, and ask them to pass on details about the Macmillan support line to anyone living with cancer who they think needs this support.

If you have any questions about the service, or want additional details, please email Ed Wallace, Head of Innovation at [edwallace@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:edwallace@macmillan.org.uk).