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Living with cancer

# What is the emotional impact of cancer?

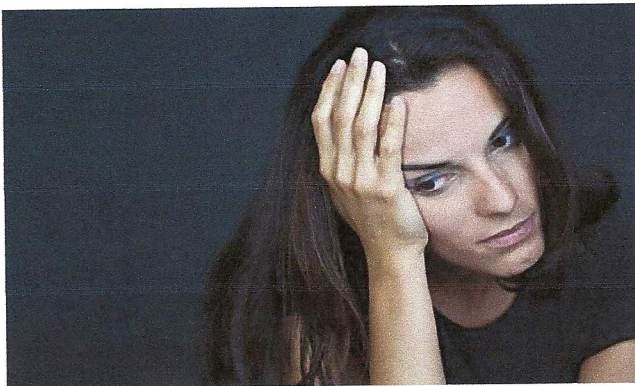
## Discussion roundup

The key points from [our online discussion](#) on the long-term and short-term psychological impact of diagnosis and treatment

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**Sarah Johnson**

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'Many people feel isolated by their cancer experience, which makes it harder to cope,' says Ruth Carlyle of Macmillan.  
Photograph: Adam Gregor/Alamy

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### The current situation

**Prof Maggie Watson**, clinical psychologist: The NHS is still far from providing the level of expert help needed to support people coping with [cancer](#). This help should be seen as an integral part of cancer services, with appropriate resources made available. In this way, care of a patient's emotional and psychological needs could be recognised as a routine part of cancer care by health professionals.

**Nóirín O'Neill**, solicitor recovering from acute promyelocytic leukaemia: While I am grateful I survived cancer, it has been hard to accept the "fall out" as it has affected my life in so many different ways ... In my view, the emotional and psychological impact of cancer is lifelong. The further into survivorship I go, my needs change. In reality, what we need is a lifelong support programme.

**Watson:** To me it is important that psychological care is provided by the health service. Patients appreciate that those professionals caring for their physical health also care about their emotional needs. Charities do a great job and have an important role to play. But it is important that cancer services integrate psychological care into everyday physical care and see this as part of professional comprehensive cancer care. At the moment, the provision of expert psychological care within the NHS is still seriously underresourced.

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