

Dear

Thank you for your email, it has been passed on to the Cancer Information and Support Service here at Cancer Council Victoria. I am so sorry to hear that you are feeling drained of resilience and are no longer feeling like the person you used to be. Watching someone you love enduring an illness, treatment and its effects can be very challenging and tiring. It is not surprising at all that you are feeling emotionally drained, so I am glad that you thought to contact us for some support and guidance.

Firstly, I am going to include a link to our booklet 'Caring for someone with Cancer' in case you have not seen it. It is natural to be worried about the demands that come with a caring role, and the impact this might have on your life. Caring involves managing both your own physical and emotional needs and those of the person you are caring for. This booklet offers practical tips on navigating the experience of cancer while balancing the demands of caring, family, work and your own needs. It does not need to be read from cover to cover, just read the parts that are relevant to you at the time. The link to the booklet is here:

<https://www.cancervic.org.au/downloads/resources/booklets/Caring-for-someone-with-cancer.pdf>

\_\_\_\_\_ regarding counselling services there are a couple of different ways in which you can access counselling. If \_\_\_\_\_ is still receiving treatment, we first encourage people to speak with their treating oncologist (if applicable), as many hospitals and treatment centres can offer counselling support to people and families who are affected by cancer. They may be able to provide a referral to counselling services that are best suited to your needs.

Secondly, if counselling via the treating hospital is not available, we then encourage people to seek advice regarding counselling by discussing this with their GP. The GP can act as an additional support person, as well as assist with the referral process. A GP referral would also make the psychologist appointments cheaper, as you could be eligible for Medicare rebates this way. Once you have been linked in with a psychologist, you are able to make appointments with them as frequently as your needs require.

You may also like to visit the Australian Psychological Society's website. This is an online directory of all registered counsellors and psychologists in Victoria, and people can search for a provider by inputting their postcode. The website can be accessed here: <http://www.psychology.org.au/>

If neither of these options are feasible, here at Cancer Council Victoria, we can offer free appointments delivered by Cancer Council Queensland's counselling service for eligible callers to our Cancer Council Information and Support Service. This service is open to people with a cancer diagnosis as well as family members. This is a short-term telephone-based counselling service designed to be accessed by those who cannot otherwise contact a counsellor or psychologist. If this is something that you think would be of benefit, I would encourage you to speak to one of our cancer nurses to see if you are eligible and to organise a referral to this free counselling service. We would be happy to discuss this further and help to organise this initial support.

Another organisation that you may find helpful is Carers Victoria. Carers Victoria provides information, advice and support to carers, and they have several services available to help navigate the different challenges you may face. Carers Victoria aim to improve carers health, wellbeing, resilience and financial security. You can contact Carers Victorian on 1800 242 636 or alternatively you can look at their website which may provide you some additional information. The link to the website is here: <http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/>

I also wanted to let you know about the other sorts of programs and services that we offer to people affected by cancer. Our programs aim to support people practically and emotionally, but we also aim to ensure people have access to evidence-based information relating to their diagnosis and treatment. You can read more about the types of programs we offer for you here: <http://www.cancervic.org.au/how-we-can-help>

Steve, I hope this information has been of some reassurance to you. If you would like to discuss any of the above further, please do not hesitate to contact our Cancer Information and Support Service on 13 11 20 (for the cost of a local call) and speak with an experienced cancer nurse. Our lines are open from Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and we would warmly welcome your call.

Kind regards,