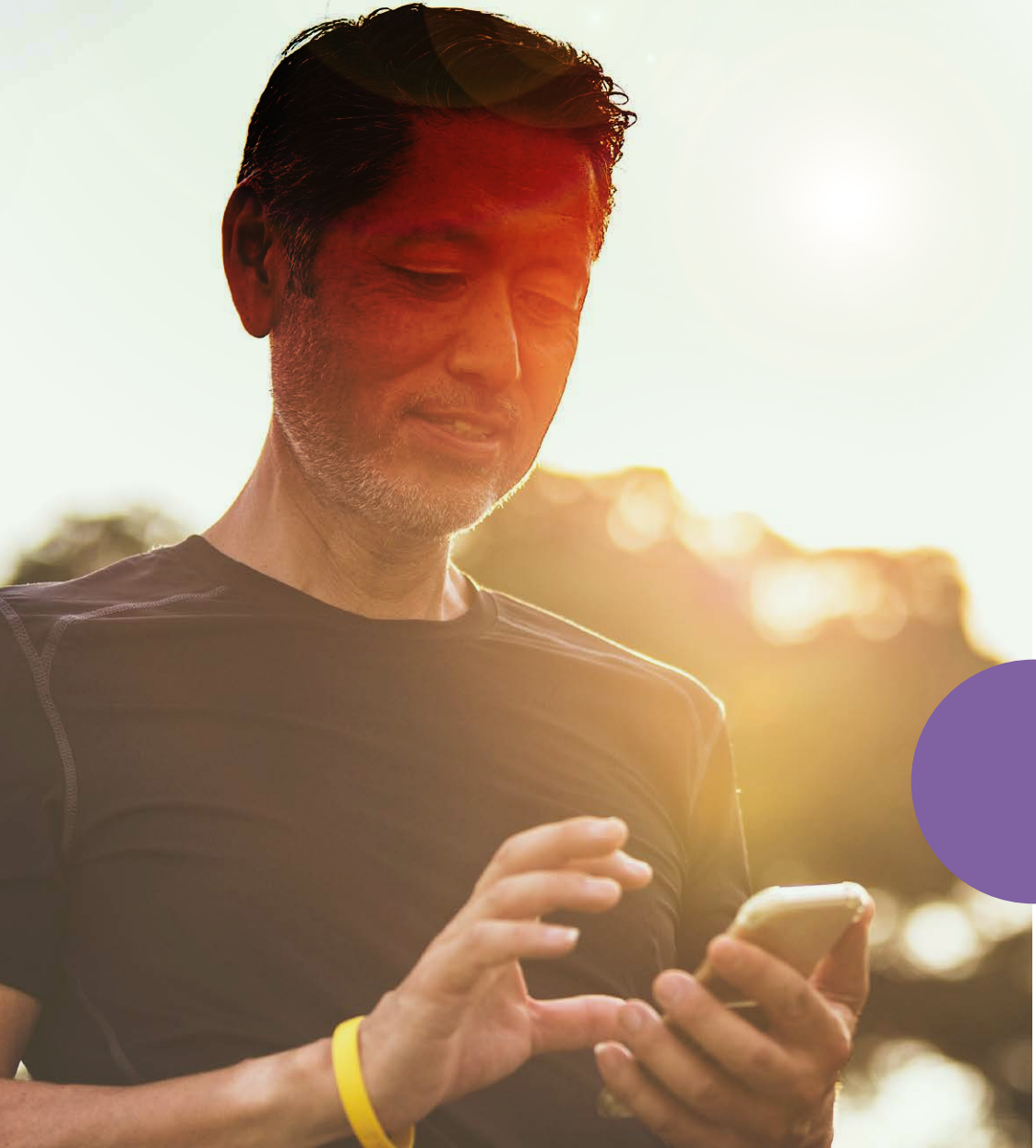


SECTION 5.

# *Making a plan*





## *Planning is an important part of our daily life.*

It enables us to organise our day, organise a weekend with family or have something to look forward to. Of course, making a plan when you feel uncertain about what is ahead of you can be more challenging. Maybe you feel like you can't make plans, or can only plan ahead in short chunks, such as until your next scan. Setting goals and making a plan for how to achieve them doesn't need to be big picture. Sometimes a small goal, like learning some mindfulness techniques or increasing the amount of vegies you eat, can be a great place to start.

This section will guide you through how to make a plan, so you can work towards goals that will help you manage your health, look after yourself and your family, and live the best life you can.

### A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

#### ***Building structure into everyday***

*"You're working flat out one day, and the next day you're not working at all. Mostly people plan to retire and get their head around it over a period of time. But if it just happens all of a sudden – well, in my case, I've needed to build structure back into my life, so I'm just not sitting there."*

– MIKE



## Starting simple

If you're unsure where to start, the best thing is to start simple. Remember your diagnosis has probably felt like a planet crashing into your house. It can take time to adjust your lifestyle and plans to accommodate the changes. Here are two ideas that may help you plan a little beyond tomorrow or next week.

## 'Find your compass'

One activity to try is 'finding your compass'. This can help you stop, take stock of what is going on and reassess what is most important to you.

Answering the following questions will help you frame your future plans and guide your choices.

- **Who is around you?**
- **What are you doing?**
- **Why are you doing this?**
- **What is important?**
- **What personal values guide your actions and choices?**

## 'Three things to get you started'

Another way to help focus your energy is to think about doing one of these three things each day:

- 1. have something to look forward to**
- 2. spend some time with people you care about**
- 3. do something that has meaning to you.**

These activities don't need to be complicated or become huge events. It could be as simple as going out for coffee with a friend or reconnecting with an old interest. People often talk about the benefit of building a routine, so what better place to start than building a routine with these three things?



# Managing your health

When you are diagnosed with brain cancer, the medical team has a very active role in managing your health. In the early stages, you're often busy with appointments, scans, advice from the medical teams and treatment. However, after that period passes and interactions with the medical team begin to reduce, the role of taking care of your condition shifts over to you. You have

a greater opportunity to take charge of your health, your lifestyle and your choices. This is sometimes called self-management. It is where people become more active in the ongoing management of their health and work in an active partnership with the medical team. Taking charge of your health, your decisions and your future is a big part of working out how to live with brain cancer.

## Taking an active role

The fact that you are reading this resource means you're taking an active role and want to take steps to manage your health well into the future. This resource is full of tips and strategies to help you take charge—to actively self-manage. Being an active self-manager means you are doing these three tasks<sup>8</sup>:

- 1 taking care of your illness:** this is done by attending your appointments and scans, taking prescribed medication, asking questions of your treating team and being informed about your condition
- 2 carrying out your normal activities:** this means actively participating in day-to-day life, socialising, playing with your kids, doing the dishes, or doing something with purpose each day

- 3 managing emotional changes:** this means recognising some of the challenges you face and ensuring you look after your mental health. It may be about identifying when you need some help and support from others, or using strategies you have learned.

## Setting goals

Goal setting, or more specifically SMART goal setting, was introduced in the 'Looking after yourself' section in reference to getting back into exercise. This way of setting goals

can be used for any type of goal you identify. Goal setting helps to focus your efforts and ensure you are working towards your goals in a sustainable and realistic way.

*Just to re-cap, S.M.A.R.T. goals are:*

- S Specific:** What do you want to achieve? Be as specific as you can. For example, "I want to drink six glasses of water each day".
- M Measurable:** your goal should be specific, so you can check if you are progressing towards it. For example, keep track of how much water you are drinking.
- A Achievable:** Start by setting a goal you feel you can actually achieve. You can always build on that goal the next time. For example, set a goal to drink six glasses of water a day over three days each week.
- R Relevant:** is this goal something you really want to achieve? If it's not that important to you, there may be better goals to set.
- T Timely:** how long will it take you to achieve this goal? Can you commit to that time and is it realistic? For example, you might decide you will focus on the days of the week you are working, like Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, because you have a more regular routine on those days.

## Feeling confident about your goal

The other important element in setting goals is how confident you feel in being able to achieve them. What is your confidence level in achieving them out of 10? Is it 5/10 or 8/10 confident? The more confident you are to achieve your goal, the more realistic, and the more successful you'll be.

If your confidence is lower, try working through a solution. What could you do to increase your success? Could someone help you? Could the goal be modified? Are there local services that could help you achieve your goal? On the next two pages are some goal-setting worksheets you can use to help you refocus on what you want to work through.

# Making a plan

This worksheet can be used to help you create an action plan to achieve an important goal or milestone. It may help to break your goal down into smaller goals, e.g. weekly goals to help achieve your overall goal. Copy this sheet as many times as you like to keep building on your goals.

What do I want to achieve? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How am I going to do it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will I know I have achieved it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who will I involve in my plan? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will I reward myself? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What might set me back and how will I deal with it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How can local services help me reach my goal? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_













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