

# Experiences of a cancer post-treatment group intervention and effects on reported wellbeing, worry, self-efficacy, diet and activity

Brown, L. & Allan, J.: University of Aberdeen

Makinson, J., Harrison, M., Mountford-Lister, M., Muir, R., Proudlove, M., & Howells, L.:

Maggie's [www.maggiescentres.org](http://www.maggiescentres.org)



## Background

With more people living with and beyond cancer, innovative, person-centred care is required. 'Where Now?' is a seven week course designed to meet these holistic needs.

Maggie's multidisciplinary model of cancer care combines oncology expertise and information with evidence-based psychological support, within unique purpose-built buildings aimed at maximising opportunity for social support.

'Where Now?' courses are delivered at Maggie's Centres by a range of health professionals and expert facilitators, aimed at helping people to improve their quality of life post-treatment. Previous evaluation has evidenced that course participation reduces distress and negativity about the future. Some individuals also reported that participation made them feel more confident in making changes to their lifestyle.

Nearly a decade since introducing 'Where Now?' to the Maggie's programme of cancer care this study revisits its effectiveness, in evaluating whether participation

produces measurable changes in wellbeing, cancer worry, self-efficacy, physical activity and/or diet for individuals who have completed cancer treatment.

## Methodology

In a pre-post design, two questionnaires were used to assess changes in health behaviours; the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) and Healthy Eating Vital Signs Questionnaire (HEVS), with additional self-efficacy items. The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), Cancer Worry Scale (CWS) and the World Health Organisation Quality of Life Questionnaire (WHOQOL) assessed wellbeing and self-efficacy.

All participants were invited to consent to being contacted for an interview after the course ended.

## Results

Across three Maggie's Centres, 25 females and 2 males (mean age 51.7 years) completed pre- and post-questionnaires. Eight (2 males and 6 females) participants chose to undertake a semi-structured interview exploring individual experiences of 'Where Now?'.

## Experiences of 'Where Now?' - Key themes

### Social support

"It was the networking and having a group of people you could speak to openly and they wouldn't have a preconceived idea of what you've gone through because they're aware everyone's different"

### Future thinking

"You know they were making you think about your own goals. What you want to achieve, things like that and if I hadn't come on the course I wouldn't have thought anything like that."

### Cancer journey realisation

"It made me realise that even though I had finished all of my treatment I'm not back to where I was a year ago and you know as much as I wanted to be, you know active mum and stuff, I wasn't, I was really tired"

### Maggie's Centre appreciation

"Through the illness and then coming here. Maggie's has changed my world."

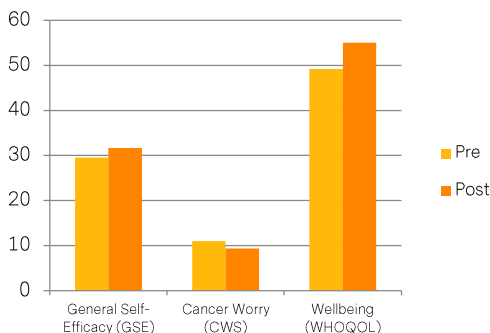
### Enhancement of health and wellbeing

"Apart from speaking to everybody, just how to get yourself, getting back into a bit of exercise and you know we learned things from that, that none of us really knew"

## Effect on health behaviours, self-efficacy and wellbeing

Paired samples t-tests and Wilcoxon signed ranks tests revealed that participation in the intervention was associated with significant pre-post increases in reported wellbeing ( $p = .000$ ), and general self-efficacy ( $p = .047$ ), and a significant pre-post reduction in cancer worry ( $p = .010$ ).

However, no changes were found in healthy eating, physical activity, or self-efficacy to change diet or physical activity level.



## Conclusions

Evidence suggests that the 'Where Now?' intervention is effective in helping people live with less worry and an improved sense of wellbeing after completion of their cancer treatment. It appears to increase individuals' general confidence and ability to cope with changes, and participants described it as a supportive and positive experience.

Further research is required to determine why intervention components targeting diet and activity do not produce measurable changes in behaviour, as well as exploring longer term effects.

Additional data collection is ongoing for this study.

