



# Talking to your peers about *Cancer*



Talking about sensitive topics, such as Cancer with your peers can feel daunting, and sometimes even uncomfortable.

Being a Cancer Ambassador within your school comes with responsibilities as you will be the voice for your peers, but also the ears for listening if someone approaches you with a concern or questions.

It's an important step in raising awareness, promoting healthy habits, and breaking the stigma. **Below are some steps to help navigate these conversations effectively, and with care:**

1.



### Educate yourself first

**Learn the basics:** Download the 'Introduction to Cancer' powerpoint to provide yourself with knowledge on: Understanding what cancer is, the common types, signs and symptoms, and treatments and their side effects.

You can also use reliable sources like the World Health Organization (WHO) or cancer charities like Cancer Research UK for more information.

**Fact check:** Be prepared with simple statistics and facts to correct myths and misunderstandings.

### Timing is everything

- Find a casual, appropriate time to bring up the topic, such as during a health lesson, group discussion, or when a related topic arises naturally.
- Avoid times when peers might feel distracted or uncomfortable, such as during dinner or break time. If a peer approaches you, however, make sure you can dedicate some time to talk to them.



2.

3.



### Keep it light

- If you're wanting to discuss this topic in a group setting, begin with a question or an interesting fact to engage their curiosity.
- Be relatable and share why the topic matters to you.

**E.g.** "Have you ever wondered why sunscreen is so important?" and "I learned this recently and thought it was something we should all know."

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### Prevention is key

**Share simple tips:** Talk about practical ways to reduce cancer risks, such as:

- Avoiding smoking and vaping.
- Wearing sunscreen and limiting sun exposure.
- Eating a balanced diet and staying active.

• **Talk about screening:** Highlight the importance of early detection and regular check-up

**E.g.** "Even though we're young, knowing about things like self-checks can make a big difference in the future, and also to remind family members to attend screenings whenever they get invited to them."

### Be sensitive

Cancer can be a personal or emotional topic. Some peers may disclose to you that they have a family member or friend affected by it.

**E.g.** "I understand this might be tough to talk about if someone close to you has been affected."

Stay non-judgmental and focus on creating a supportive atmosphere.

5.



## What to do if a peer raises a concern or disclosure:

If you're approached by a peer who expresses a concern they have about cancer, it's important to handle the situation with care, empathy, and responsibility.

Here are some steps you can take as a Cancer Ambassador:

### 1. Listen

- Give your peer your full attention and listen without interrupting.
- Avoid dismissing their concern.

### 2. Encourage professional help

If you don't feel comfortable providing advice in a certain scenario, suggest that they talk to a trusted adult, like a parent, teacher, or school counsellor, who can provide further guidance.

### 3. Offer support

- Reassure your peer that they don't have to face this alone and that help is available.
- If appropriate, offer to go with them if they want to speak to a trusted member of staff about it.

### 4. Stay calm and positive

- Keep the conversation calm and avoid expressing panic or alarm, which might make your peer more anxious.
- Offer hope by reminding them that many health concerns can be treated effectively, especially when diagnosed early.

### 5. Respect their privacy

- If they seem hesitant to talk to an adult, gently explain the importance of getting help.

### 6. Boundaries

- Know that you are not responsible for diagnosing or solving the problem. Your role is to support, not to provide medical advice!

### 7. Know when to involve an adult

- If your peer is showing signs of distress, expressing fear about a serious health condition, or avoiding seeking help, it may be necessary to involve a trusted adult even if they are reluctant.

**Remember**, trusted members of staff are there for you to share concerns with. You don't have to carry the weight of it all on your shoulders on your own.

If you have a particular worry about one of your peers, make sure you tell a member of staff who may be able to support the student further in a professional way.



South Yorkshire & Bassetlaw

# Shows Up



Tackling  
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