Using a cognitive behavioural model to understand reactions to cancer, the authors present cognitive, behavioural, emotional and interpersonal interventions to help people adjust to the threat to their life and their view of themselves. Case examples illustrate how these techniques are used to reduce anxiety and depression, induce a fighting spirit, teach effective coping skills and develop open communication between patients and their partners. Mental health professionals working in oncology and health care professionals interested in psychological management will find this a useful source for psychological techniques that can be applied in a busy clinical setting.