

# Using the 'Evidencing Work Based Learning' module to improve the experience of people with cancer

## Cancer pathways and treatment

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The Macmillan Evidencing Work Based Learning (EWBL) module is run virtually, in partnership with the University of West of England (UWE), and aims to support Macmillan professionals to navigate the complexities of implementing a service development project in their own place of work and to develop them as leaders in cancer care. This module is fully funded by Macmillan Cancer Support.

### Background

Managing change in today's health and social care systems introduces a layer of complexity to implementing improvements to service delivery. As can be seen in Figure 1, one in two people will have a diagnosis of cancer in their lifetime. The number of people living with cancer will increase to 5.3 million by 2040. Many people with cancer have other long term conditions and this will increase pressure on services to adapt and evolve to meet their changing needs. Despite improvements in diagnosis and treatments, health inequalities still exist across the cancer pathway. Macmillan professionals often want to introduce changes in practice and services to improve the experience of people living with cancer. The EWBL module offers an opportunity for the Macmillan professional to achieve this.

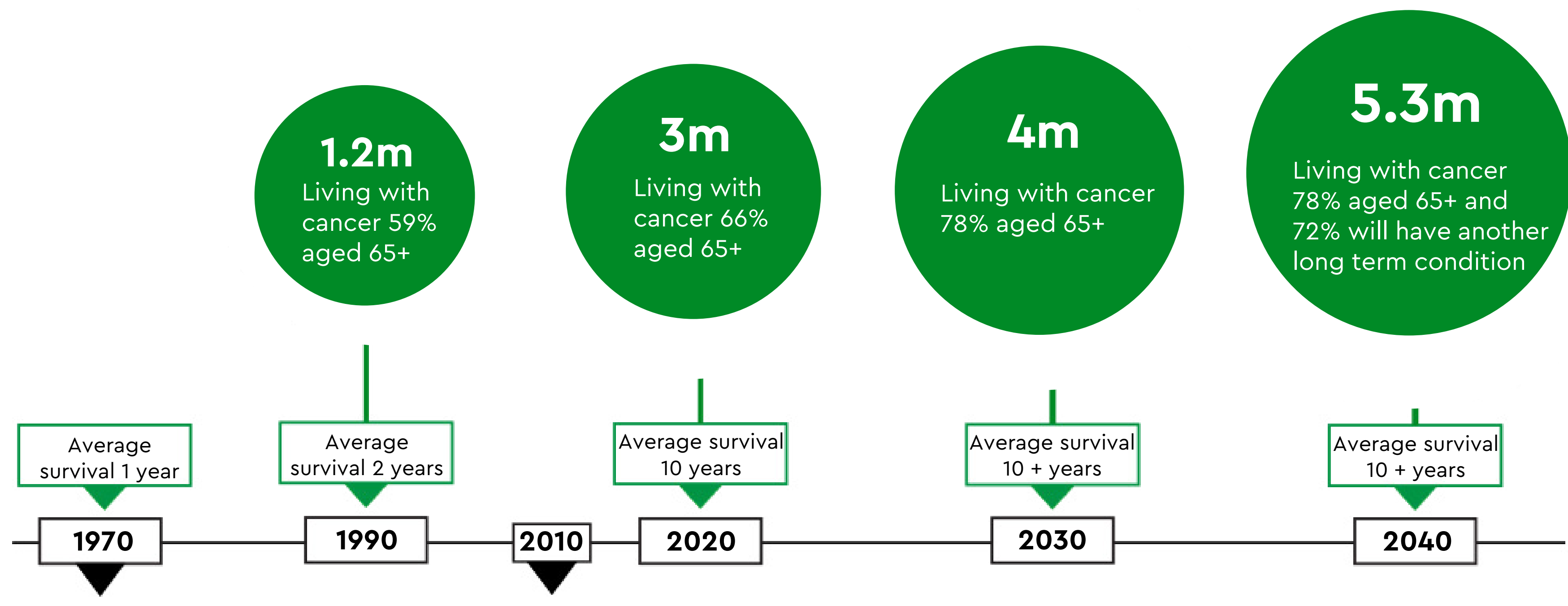
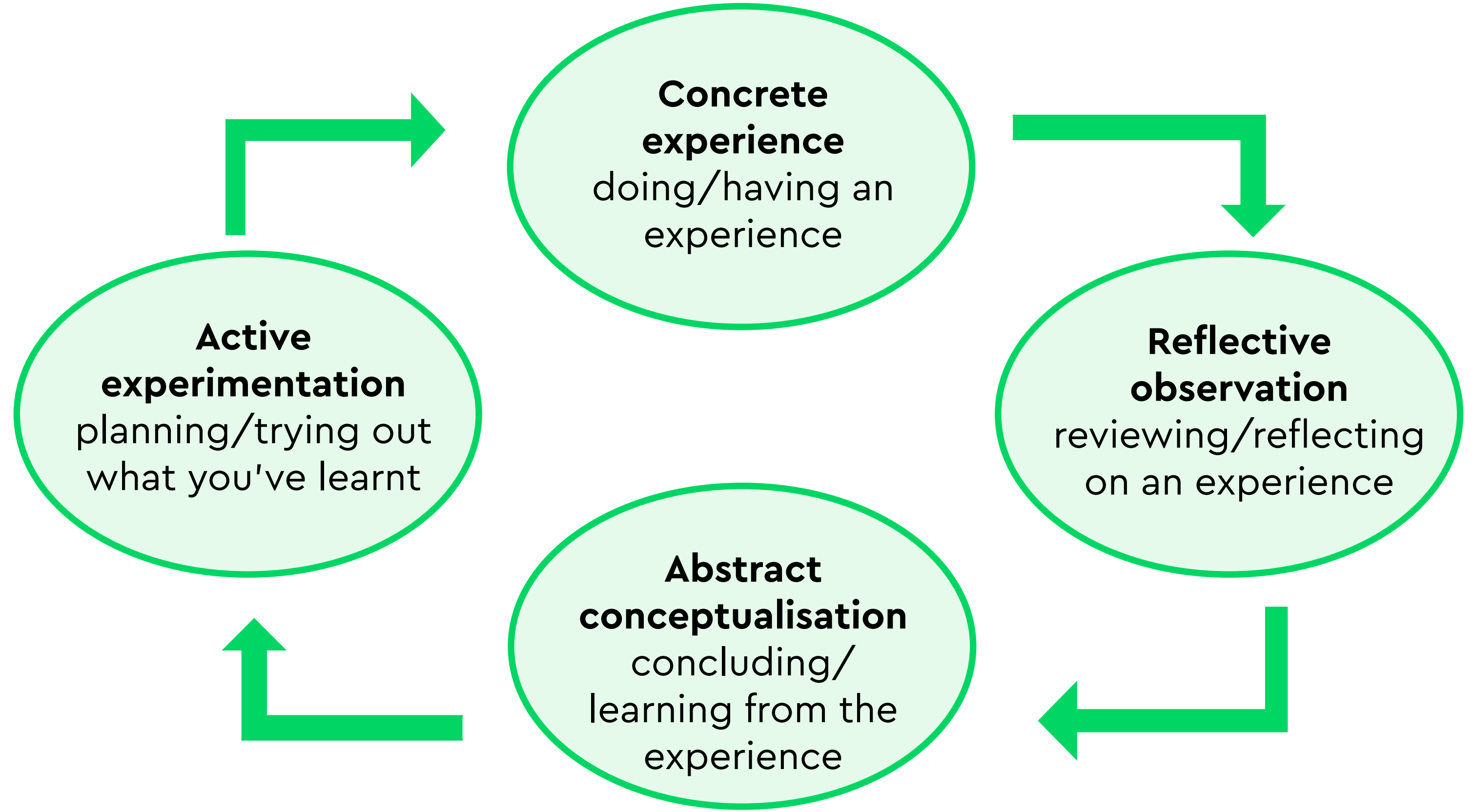


Figure 1. The changing story of cancer<sup>1</sup>



### Methods

Macmillan Cancer Support funds Macmillan professionals and a small number of non Macmillan professionals, to undertake the EWBL module run in collaboration with UWE. Students learn about project management, managing change and organisational development and undertake five virtual study days using action learning sets<sup>2</sup>. The action learning set approach is informed by Kolb's experiential learning cycle<sup>3</sup> as seen in Figure 2. This learning supports the student to implement a work based project with the agreement of their line manager.

Figure 2. Kolb's experiential learning cycle

### Results

For almost a decade, Macmillan Professionals have used the EWBL module to improve the experience of people living with cancer. Some examples of the service improvements include:

- Development of Cancer Champions in Primary Care to enhance the care and support to newly diagnosed people with cancer
- Development of a prehabilitation service for head and neck oncology patients prior to surgery or chemo-radiotherapy treatment
- Improving outcomes for head and neck cancer patients with a palliative diagnosis
- The use of Virtual reality for improved management of pain and anxiety for an inpatient population in the specialised area of palliative care

The benefits to professionals undertaking the EWBL module include:

- Access to a fully funded university module
- An opportunity to progress to a degree or masters level by gaining 30 credits
- Student networking and sharing learning and experiences with national, multi-professional group



Figure 3. Word cloud created by EWBL cohort describing their experience of the module

### Conclusion

The EWBL module offers professionals a unique opportunity to improve the lives of people living with cancer and to develop themselves as leaders in cancer care.

For more information log in to the Macmillan Learning Hub and search for EWBL or contact PDKleads@macmillan.org.uk



1. Evidence and Insight, Macmillan Cancer Support, 2023  
2. Revans RW. ABC of action learning. Gower Publishing, Ltd.; 2011.  
3. Kolb DA. Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. FT press; 2014

