

## Our story

Odyssey was founded in 1994 by Canterbury based oncologist Dr Howard Smedley, who had previously used outdoor adventure activities for the purposes of staff development and training. One day, it occurred to him that something similar might benefit many of his patients. The first course was run later that year in Kent. Since then the charity has consistently run courses in the region, and when funding allows in Wales, Oxfordshire and Cumbria.

### The Odyssey team

The staff members who run the courses are drawn from a larger group of Outdoor Development trainers. Between them they have an immense breadth of experience, an awareness and sensitivity to the needs of cancer patients, a passionate belief in the power of the outdoors and a huge sense of fun. Throughout the course staff will ensure that every participant feels comfortable and safe.



## Fundraising

### How you can help

In order to transform lives we rely on the generosity of people who donate to the charity and those who fundraise on our behalf.

### Odyssey challenge events

Odyssey has organized many fundraising adventures. We've canoed rivers and lakes in Sweden and traversed the Great Glen, we've trekked through the Sahara, Vietnam and Nepal and cycled from castle to castle through Wales. Meanwhile, runners have Raced the Train from Tywyn to Abergynolwyn and pounded the streets of Newcastle in the Great North Run.

### Organize your own event

Why not organise your own event? Whether it's a cake bake, barn dance, raffle, curry night, table-top sale, pamper day... in fact anything you fancy... just let us know and we'll be delighted to support you.

If you'd like to join us on one of our future events please go to [odyssey.org.uk/events](http://odyssey.org.uk/events)

## Results - making a difference

For over 25 years participants have been telling us that Odyssey has transformed their lives. It has helped them:

- Deal with uncertainty
- Face the future with new optimism and confidence
- Return to work
- Become a mum, dad, wife, husband again
- Become more physically active
- Take up a hobby or start volunteering
- Return to education
- Engage with the community
- Appreciate life

Results of evaluations carried out pre and post course over a number of years have confirmed that the benefits are real and long lasting.

For more information please go to [odyssey.org.uk](http://odyssey.org.uk) or call 0345 363 2207

 [facebook.com/odysseycharity](https://www.facebook.com/odysseycharity)

 [twitter.com/odysseycharity](https://twitter.com/odysseycharity)



Challenging Cancer  
**Odyssey**



Helping people with  
cancer rebuild  
their lives

Our programme takes just 5 days, but the difference lasts a lifetime

*I have learnt to live in the moment and not to fear the future. Happiness is in the present moment all around me, if I listen I will hear it, if I look I will see it.*

**Bernadette: Kent Odyssey participant**

## *Odyssey Challenging Cancer – who we are*

Odyssey is a national charity that helps people with cancer overcome the psychological impact of their illness by rebuilding their shattered spirits and restoring their zest for life.

## *Our Courses*

### **What we do**

**Odyssey's approach is of active involvement** rather than introspection. Our courses are five day, fully residential and free of charge to the participants.

**We are a unique charity** which takes participants on a journey through the unknown, blending the majesty of the outdoors with new challenges, fun, camaraderie and both peer and professional support.

**The charity is there for anyone over 18** who is living with or has had a recent experience of cancer. No special abilities are required just enthusiastic participation.

Although participants may be asked to extend themselves, a very high level of flexibility is built into each activity so that everyone can participate to a level that is right for them.

*Our aim is to support people to succeed and not to overwhelm.*

## *Attending an Odyssey Course*

### **How to join us**

To attend an Odyssey course patients must be referred by a health professional.

Throughout the U.K health professionals working in the NHS, private hospitals, hospices and GP surgeries are familiar with the work of Odyssey and regularly refer their patients onto our courses. We call them "Odyssey Referrers".

If you wish to join us, speak to a health professional involved in your care. If they are already an "Odyssey Referrer" they will know the dates of the next course and be able to sign you up. If they are hearing about us for the first time ask them to contact us at [info@odyssey.org.uk](mailto:info@odyssey.org.uk). All emails and messages will be responded to promptly.

### **Referring your patients**

We welcome new "Odyssey Referrers" – if you would like to find out more please use the above contact email.



*I'm so grateful to have been given the chance to go on my Odyssey adventure, it has given me a greater confidence & topped up my positivity levels.*

**Lorna: Cumbria Odyssey**

*Nice to know you're not on your own. Nice to be in a group of people who understood me. I didn't feel out of place. We laughed so much, so much.*

**Beverley: Kent Odyssey**



*The course came at a perfect time when I needed help taking stock and motivation. I emerged from the course happier, more relaxed and determined to enjoy life.*

**David: Cumbria Odyssey**



*It made me feel alive again and I was able to recognise me again*

**Kirsty: Kent Odyssey**



*Odyssey quite frankly saved me, I was in a very dark place; not any longer. Thank you.*

**Nick: Kent Odyssey**

