



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# An Introduction to Health Psychology

Issued by the Pharmacy Department



You have been referred to one of the Health Psychology specialists. This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions that you might have about Health Psychology.

## **What is Health Psychology?**

Health Psychology in the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has a range of health professionals, including clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists, psychological therapists, psychotherapists and counsellors.

They have specialist knowledge about the difficulties that people living with physical health conditions commonly experience, and the skills to help people to overcome them.

## **What does Health Psychology do?**

Having a physical health condition can be challenging. Stress, emotional problems and life events can also make physical health conditions harder to manage. Living with a physical health condition can affect how you feel and think, and what you can do.

Health Psychology works with specific physical health conditions and their specialist healthcare teams.

Our aim is to help people with many different types of emotional problems related to living with a physical health condition. These may include stress, anger and frustration, anxiety, panic attacks, depression, and tensions in relationships due to physical health problems. We can help you adjust to and cope with a new diagnosis, physical health condition and its symptoms. This may include helping you with lifestyle changes.

We will work with you to help you build an understanding of your difficulties, develop your coping skills and your confidence in these. We offer time and space for you to reflect on issues that are important to you. Also, we are able to provide practical advice, including relaxation techniques and anxiety management.

Mostly we work with individuals, but also with couples, families and groups. To make sure you receive the best possible care, we can also link with other health professionals, such as, doctors, specialist nurses, physiotherapists and dieticians.

This will be done with your permission and will be discussed with you at your appointment.

## **What can you expect from your appointment?**

Your first appointment will usually last up to one hour. At this appointment we can discuss the reason for your referral, how you have been feeling and any difficulties that you have. The aim is to develop an understanding of your needs and decide together whether psychological therapy might be helpful for you.

Sometimes people come for one or two appointments. Often people come for a series of appointments. Appointments are usually fortnightly but this will be discussed with you.

## **Comments from patients about what they gained from attending Health Psychology**

“A chance to express my concerns to a specialist who I believe understood fully how I felt”.

“A better understanding of my illness and how to cope better. I can now control panic attacks”.

“I found that talking to the psychologist helped me a great deal”.

## **Confidentiality**

Psychologists and therapists in Health Psychology are part of your medical team. We ask permission that the essentials of our discussion are shared with the person who referred you and other health professionals as necessary.

If there are any other times that we need to share information about you, we will discuss this with you first and answer any questions that you have.

Confidentiality will be discussed further with you at your first appointment.

## Copies of letters

You also have the right to receive copies of all letters that are sent between health professionals about your care. This will hopefully increase your involvement and help you better understand your own healthcare. This will be discussed at your first appointment.

## Contact details

Health Psychology is based at North Tyneside General Hospital. However, depending on the service, appointments are available at a number of sites including North Tyneside, Wansbeck and Hexham General Hospitals.

Your initial appointment letter will state when and where you will be seen. If you need to discuss this further or have any further enquiries, please contact us:

Telephone 0191 293 4193

Health Psychology secretaries are available Monday to Wednesday, 8.30am to 4.30pm, Thursday to Friday 9am to 2pm. An answer machine is available out of these hours, please leave us a message with your name and contact details so we can get back to you.

## Where can I find more information?

You can learn more about Health Psychology, from the British Psychological Society (telephone: 0116 2549568, [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)) or the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (telephone: 01455 883300, [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)).



# Notes

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## **Alternative Formats**

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

## **Other sources of information**

### **NHS 111**

### **NHS Choices**

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### **NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)**

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 01670 511098

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### **Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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