



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Psychology services for people with cancer

Issued by Health Psychology



This leaflet is designed to answer common questions about attending psychology appointments.

What are psychologists and therapists?

Psychologists and therapists have been trained to help people with emotional and psychological difficulties which can be related to their health problems. They see people who are anxious, depressed or who have other psychological difficulties as a result of being ill or having hospital treatment.

Adults of all ages and with long and short term difficulties can be seen.

Within our service we have clinical psychologists, psychological therapists, trainee clinical psychologists and assistant psychologists.

How can seeing a psychologist/ therapist help me?

It is known that 1 in 3 people with cancer develop anxiety and depression and coming to hospital for treatment can be one of the major sources of stress and worry. Even though these are normal reactions in this situation the psychology service aims to provide specialist support and psychological therapy to assist at this difficult time.

Natural responses can be anxiety, panic, low mood and depression. Illness can also have an impact on partners, relatives and family.

Why choose a “talking therapy” and how can it help?

At difficult times in our lives taking some extra time to talk over our situation and our thoughts and feelings may be helpful.

Talking therapies work by offering you some time and space to understand your situation. The psychologist/therapist can also offer specialist therapies to help with specific problems for example

- Counselling
- Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Cognitive analytic therapy (CAT)
- Relaxation and Mindfulness
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR)

What will happen at my first appointment?

Your first appointment will normally be at an out patient clinic at North Tyneside General Hospital, Wansbeck General Hospital or Hexham General Hospital but could also be on the ward while you are an in-patient. It will last approximately 45 – 60 minutes.

The purpose of the appointment (and maybe a further one or two) will be to discuss and understand your situation, and the problems or difficulty you would like help with.

The psychologist/therapist will have some information from the person who has referred you but will want to hear what you think is important.

The choice of what you discuss is up to you.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes. It can be helpful to bring someone with you if that is what you want. It can also be helpful to see the psychologist/ therapist alone, and you have the choice.

How many times will I have to see the psychologist / therapist?

The number of times you meet will depend upon your difficulties and what you choose to discuss. It varies from person to person. An average number of sessions is 8 - 10.

Appointments are usually arranged between 8.30am and 5.00pm, and may be weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

The type and length of therapy will be agreed by you and your psychologist/therapist together depending upon what you agree you need and want.

When your sessions come to an end, at a time which is agreed between you and your psychologist/therapist, you may be given the option of a follow up appointment to see how things are going.

How long will I have to wait to see a therapist?

We see everyone who is referred to the service as soon as possible. However demand can be high and this can lead to waiting lists.

This will be discussed with you by the person who referred you. If your name is added to our waiting list we will keep you informed of when you can expect to be seen.

If your situation becomes worse while you are waiting, please contact the person who referred you or contact us directly. If your situation improves and you no longer wish to be seen we ask that you let us know as it helps with waiting times.

Who else will know I am seeing the psychologist/ therapist? Is it confidential?

Health teams share information so they can provide you with the best possible care. We ask permission that the essentials of our discussion are shared with the person who referred you and other necessary health professionals. This will be done with your permission and we are happy to discuss this with you.

We ensure information (notes and records) are kept under strict security as defined by the Trust's policies.

You have the right to receive copies of any letters about you and you will be asked if and how you would like to receive them in your first appointment. This will hopefully increase your involvement and help you better understand your healthcare.

What if it's not for me?

Not all people who are referred choose to take up the offer of a talking therapy, as they find the method isn't what they want. If you feel like this let us know and we will try and suggest some alternative types of help or support.

What if I have further questions?

Please feel free to ask any questions at any time about the service we provide.

Contacting us

If you have any queries about your appointment or arrangements please contact us via telephone - 0191 293 4309.

The office is open between 8.30 – 5.00 pm. If no-one is available to take your call, we have an answering machine and messages will be answered as soon as possible.

Finding us

A map and directions to the clinic where you will be seen will be sent with your first appointment letter.

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

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 07815 500015

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

PIN 529/V4

Review date: September 2022

© This material is the copyright of the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust