



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Bariatric Surgery Psychology Service

Issued by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Introduction

This leaflet describes the Bariatric Surgery Psychology Service and helps you to understand why you may be referred and/or how you can access the service.

What is a bariatric psychologist?

A bariatric psychologist is a clinical psychologist with specialist skills in working with those who have chosen to access bariatric surgery or who have undergone bariatric surgery. This includes operations for gastric bands, balloons, sleeves and bypasses. Bariatric psychologists help you to understand ways in which your thinking, behaviour, relationships and coping are related to the difficulties that you are experiencing in relation to your weight and/or body image. Bariatric psychologists **do not prescribe medication**.

How do I get an appointment to see you?

You need to be referred to the service by another professional within the bariatric service such as a medical consultant, bariatric nurse specialist or dietitian. If it is agreed that bariatric psychology would be helpful to you and you agree to be referred, then you will be added to a waitlist and will receive an appointment in due course.

Pre-surgery

Your clinician will refer you for psychological assessment to determine your suitability for surgery if you meet any of the following criteria:

- You are experiencing comfort eating (use food as a coping strategy) or binge eat (regular, uncontrolled, excessive eating episodes)
- You have a history of trauma
- You have a mental health diagnosis and/or have ever received treatment in relation to your mental health
- You have a very negative body image and/or are highly critical/shaming of yourself in relation to your weight/ size

Post-surgery

In the **two year period** following surgery your clinician may think that it would be helpful for you to work with a bariatric psychologist for reasons such as (but not exclusively):

- Adapting to the reality of living with a gastric band, sleeve or bypass
- Ongoing difficulties with food and weight
- Adapting to a change in your sense of yourself
- Adapting to a changed physical appearance or other body image concerns.

What happens at my first appointment?

Your first appointment is called an initial assessment. It is your chance to tell the bariatric psychologist about the difficulties that you may be having. The psychologist will ask you about your life in general and your past experiences in order to help them understand you and your concerns better. The initial assessment usually lasts 1 hour. More than one appointment may be necessary to complete the assessment.

What happens next?

The purpose of psychology sessions is to support you with your bariatric journey and give you the best chance of making the most of any operation that you may have or have had. It is not to prevent people from getting surgery. The psychologist may recommend that you undergo other treatments to get you prepared for surgery (for example treatment for other mental health issues or previous trauma). It is your choice as to whether you decide to have these other treatments but if the bariatric psychologist recommends this then surgery is unlikely to be planned until such treatment has been completed.

Sometimes people only see the bariatric psychologist for one or two sessions. If you agree to a course of therapy, a typical treatment last for ten sessions.

You will be required to:

- Attend regularly (fortnightly to monthly) for 1 hour either in person, online or by telephone;
- complete therapy work between sessions in your own time.

Although psychological therapy is described as a talking therapy, it does require you to learn and build on information over the course of treatment.

What do I need to bring?

- Access to the internet and email is useful
- A pen and notepad
- A file to store therapy materials
- Anything you need to help your communication (glasses, hearing aid etc).

How will information about me be stored?

A written record and any correspondence regarding sessions will be stored within your trust medical notes. You can be copied into correspondence about you to keep you informed about how you are doing in treatment.

Contact details of the service:

Bariatric Service,
Monkseaton Medical Centre,
Cauldwell Avenue,
Whitley Bay,
NE25 9PH

Telephone: 0191 238 0006

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 945/V1

Review date: June 2023

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