

Psychology Services

Information and advice for patients

Pain Management

It has been suggested to you by a member of the pain management team that seeing a psychologist could help you and you have been placed on the waiting list for the psychology service.

Why is there a psychology service within the pain clinic?

The psychology service was set up because we recognise that being in pain can be stressful and difficult to cope with.

Sometimes people are concerned that there is a psychologist within the pain clinic and wonder if we think that your pain is 'all in your head'. This is not the reason and we know that your pain is real. When we are in pain, our thoughts and feelings are affected. We might be frustrated, sad or worried and our self-confidence can be reduced. Pain might distract us to the extent that we stop planning, avoid social activities and don't enjoy life anymore.

Pain can bring about big changes in our lives and those of our family members. There are many short and long-term changes to make in relationships, work and in our lifestyles.

How can the psychology service help me?

The aim of the psychology service is to help you cope better with your pain and feel better about yourself. You may have worked out your own ways of coping with many of your difficulties but the psychologist can help you to think about different ways of looking at things. The psychologist can offer you an individual service based on your needs.

The psychologist also assesses people for the pain management programme and delivers part of the programme, so you may come into contact with the psychologist again after your psychological treatment has finished.

Who are psychologists?

Psychologists are specialists trained to understand how people think, feel and behave and how their experiences shape their lives. They can provide various forms of very effective treatments for conditions such as anxiety, depression and relationships problems. Psychologists are not medical doctors and unlike psychiatrists they do not prescribe drugs or offer physical treatments.

How many sessions will I need with the psychologist?

You have been placed on the waiting list for a full assessment with the psychologist. This assessment will last between 30 minutes and 1 hour. After this assessment the psychologist may arrange further sessions with you. You may only need 1 or 2 or may need more sessions

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over a longer period of time. If your needs are more complex, the psychologist will discuss other suitable services that you can be referred to in the community.

As the end of your treatment approaches, your psychologist will discuss future problems and ways of handling these more effectively.

The psychology sessions take place in the pain clinic at City Hospital.

What information does the psychologist keep about me and how is it kept?

The psychologist will keep short notes of things they need to remember about your treatment, which will be documented with your medical notes and kept confidential.

This information will only be shared with other health professionals (e.g. doctors, nurses) involved in your care so that they can all work together for your benefit. We only pass on information if there is a genuine need for it. If any of the information is particularly sensitive, we will ask your permission before sharing it.

During the course of your treatment, we will need to write to your GP and will send a copy to your consultant and other healthcare professionals currently treating you to inform them of your progress. All of these people are under legal obligation to keep information about you confidential and secure.

In exceptional cases, for example if the psychologist believed you were at risk of self-harm or involved in serious criminal activity, they may inform your GP or the police and you would be told about this beforehand.

Please discuss any concerns you have about confidentiality with your psychologist.

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Further information

If you have any questions or concerns about our psychology services please contact pain management services.

Pain Management Services

0121 507 4344 or 0121 507 5602

Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our website www.swbh.nhs.uk or follow us on *Twitter* @SWBHnhs.

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 'Psychological therapies for the management of chronic pain in adults', April 2009

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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