

What about confidentiality?

Everything you say to me is confidential and I will normally only disclose information to professionals involved in your care with your consent. However, information is stored on an electronic system which can be accessed by other professionals involved in your care. You will always see any written correspondence between professionals within our team.

The only time I may have to break your confidentiality is if you tell me something that makes me concerned about your safety or the safety of someone else. In this case I would always discuss this with you first if possible.

What next?

If you are interested in meeting with us and have not yet been referred, please talk to your hospital doctor or nurse and they can refer you.

Your medical care will not be affected in any way if you decide that you do not want to pursue this sort of help.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Clinical Health Psychology Service

A patient's guide

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What is the Clinical Health Psychology service?

You may have a physical health condition and be wondering how we can help.

We are psychologists who work within medical and surgical teams to provide a holistic approach to health problems. Everyone's experience of living with a health condition is different. Your health condition might affect you in one or some of these ways:

- feeling distressed, as if you can't cope with it all
- giving up things you enjoy
- feeling unhappy or angry about how your health condition has affected your life
- having concerns about work or studies
- interference with relationships with partners, family and friends
- worrying or feeling hopeless about the future
- losing your self-confidence
- difficulties with managing your condition or the treatment
- finding it hard to make changes your doctor or other member of your hospital team has recommended

How can I benefit from meeting with a psychologist?

We can talk with you about your own experience. We can explore how your physical health impacts upon your life and then look at how you would like your life to improve alongside your health condition. We can help you identify what changes are achievable and meaningful to you. We may then help you to develop new skills and/or expand your existing skills to help you work towards your desired changes.

Does this mean my doctor thinks my problems are 'all in my mind'?

No - certainly not! Seeing a psychologist does not mean that we or your hospital team think your problems are in your mind. You are simply taking a very positive step in trying to reduce the impact of your physical health condition on your life.

What will happen when I see a psychologist?

You may wish to come to the first meeting on your own, or you are welcome to bring friends or relatives with you. We will then discuss whether this service or another service may be helpful to you and you can think about whether you would like to give this a go. If yes, we will put you on our waiting list and you will be contacted as soon as an appointment becomes available. Some people benefit from just a few sessions; others may prefer a longer period of working together. Interpreters can be arranged if you need.