

# Breathlessness Support Service

## Patient information factsheet

### What is the Breathlessness Support Service?

- We are psychologists who work with the respiratory team.
- We work with people who are worried because they have a lung condition.
- We are an inclusive and respectful service in which everyone is welcome.
- Our psychology team has experience of working with people who have all sorts of different life experiences and needs and we want you to feel safe.
- Many people who have a lung condition, for example complex asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), often find their lives are affected by it in many ways.

For example:

- Feeling worried or frightened about being breathless (which then makes you more breathless)
- Feeling distressed, as if you cannot cope with it all
- Giving up things that you enjoy
- Feeling unhappy or angry about how your health condition has affected your life
- Worried that your condition is affecting your personal relationships
- Worrying or feeling hopeless about the future
- Losing your self-confidence
- Finding it difficult to manage your condition or treatments
- Struggling to cope following a recent admission to intensive care.
- Finding it hard to make changes that your doctor or the respiratory team have recommended e.g. giving up smoking, using a Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) mask.

## **How can I benefit from meeting with a Psychologist?**

- We can talk to you about your experiences of having a lung condition.
- We can help you explore how your lung condition has affected your life.
- We can then look at how you would like your life to improve alongside your respiratory condition.
- We can help you identify what changes are achievable and meaningful to you.
- We can help you to create new skills and/or develop your existing skills to help you work towards your changes.

## **Does this mean my doctor thinks my problems are ‘all in my head’?**

- No! Seeing a psychologist does not mean we think that your problems are in your head.
- You are taking a positive step to reduce the impact of your lung condition on your life.

## **What will happen when I see a psychologist?**

- You can come to the first meeting on your own, or you can bring a friend and/or relative with you.
- We will discuss how this service or another service might be helpful to you, and you can think about whether you would like to give it a go.
- Some people benefit from just one or a few sessions. Others may prefer a longer period of working together.
- We can provide you with a language interpreter, if you need one.

## **What about confidentiality?**

- Creating a safe confidential space for you to talk is our priority.
- This might include helping you to explore how your medical team can be updated on your health concerns and identifying any questions you might have for them.

- We include a summary of our meeting on the Trust electronic notes system that can be accessed by other professionals involved in your care.
- If there is anything you do not wish us to include here - and do not want us to share with your health team - then please let us know, and we will respect this.
- The only exception is if you tell us something that makes us concerned about your safety or the safety of someone else.
- In this case, we would need to share these concerns but would discuss this with you first.

## What's next?

- If you are interested in meeting with us and have not yet been referred, please talk to your respiratory doctor or nurse or member of the respiratory team 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.

## Contact our service

If you've been referred and would like to find out more, please contact:

Email address: [whh-tr.respchp@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.respchp@nhs.net)

Telephone number: 020 7527 1538

## Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or [whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net).

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please email [whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net). We will try our best to meet your needs.

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