

Lothian Older People's Psychology Service

Information for patients referred for Psychological Therapy

Introduction

This leaflet aims to give you an idea of what to expect now you have been referred to psychology. You may see a Clinical Psychologist, Trainee Clinical Psychologist or Clinical Associate in Applied Psychology. Your psychologist/therapist will be happy to discuss any of this information in more detail when you meet.

Why have I been referred?

Your doctor or healthcare worker has suggested that psychological therapy could help you, or you have asked for this. This is often due to experiencing distress. This may be related to how your life is now, or how things have been in the past. We are trained in assessing and intervening with distress using different kinds of psychological therapies. We usually see people who are age 65 or over, i.e. around the time of standard retirement.

We often see people who have been experiencing:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Bereavement
- Relationship issues
- Memory problems
- Difficulty adjusting to physical health problems
- Long-term mental health difficulties
- Carer strain
- Difficulties due to recent or past traumatic events.

Most people experience similar problems at some time in their lives. For some people these get so bad that they need some help. Your therapist may ask a number of questions about your life but you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to talk about.

What is psychological therapy?

Psychological therapy is a way of helping people to make sense of their difficulties and to identify and develop helpful ways of coping with their problems. You will be asked to try some of these coping strategies out between sessions. It is a joint process where you work together with the therapist to find the best way forward for you. You will work towards agreed goals with the therapist, over an agreed period of time.

There are different types of therapy and your therapist will discuss with you the therapies that may be helpful for your problems.

Psychological therapy has been shown to be as effective at helping people as medication.

It is important to note that we do not prescribe medication, nor do we make any changes to your medication.

What will happen at the first appointment?

At the first appointment your therapist will find out more about you and the problems you have been having. You will have the chance to discuss other things that may be related to your problems. Together you can then put together a picture of your problems and decide how to move forward. The therapist can explain what is involved with coming to see us.

With your appointment letter you have been sent some forms which will help us to understand how you are feeling and are part of your assessment.

At the first appointment you and the therapist decide together how many appointments to meet for. Sometimes it is agreed that no further sessions are needed or that this may not be the right time for psychological therapy. This can be reviewed in future.

How long are the appointments?

Appointments normally last up to one hour. At the first appointment you and your therapist will agree to meet together for a set number of sessions and then have a review to agree whether more sessions are needed. The majority of people have less than 12 sessions. You may be offered a session once a week or once a fortnight depending on what you and your therapist agree will work best for you.

Who will the therapist share information with?

After your first meeting, the therapist will write to your GP, the person who referred you to this service, and if necessary, any other healthcare workers such as mental health nurses or Occupational Therapists involved in your care. Detailed information about your case will only be shared after discussion with you unless your therapist is concerned that you or someone else is at risk. If there are some things you would prefer not to be shared, please tell your therapist who can discuss this with you. The therapist will write to your GP and referrer again when you stop attending. We hold your personal information in line with current data protection legislation and NHS policy.

What if I do not want psychological therapy?

Psychological therapy does not appeal to everybody and it may be different to what you thought it would be.

Therapists are used to discussing how people are finding the treatment and considering alternative ways forward.

Please let us know before your first appointment if you have any needs that make attending healthcare appointments more difficult. For example, some people have access needs or need help with mobility.

Contact us

Telephone: **0131 537 6901**

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please call: 0131 537 6901**