

Chalmers Psychology Service

Information for patients

Your clinician may have suggested that a referral to psychology could be helpful for your wellbeing. This is a brief overview of the service.

Across NHS Lothian there are different ways to access psychological therapy and mental health services. At Chalmers Centre, the psychology service is there to help people who live with HIV or are deemed to be at high risk of acquiring HIV, and those who have significant anxiety around potentially contracting, or having contracted, sexually transmitted infections or blood-borne viruses.

What happens if I agree to a psychology referral?

The clinician you spoke with will send a written referral and the lead Clinical Psychologist in the team will consider if they think the service is right for you. This often results in the offer of a psychology assessment appointment with a member of the team. The team consists of a Clinical Psychologist and a Clinical Associate in Applied Psychology (CAAP). Where it is clear that another service or organisation would be more helpful or that therapy would not be beneficial at this time, they may offer other suggestions to help.

What happens at a psychology assessment?

This appointment will last approximately 50 minutes and will involve understanding more about some of the challenges you are facing. You will also be given questionnaires about how you are feeling – please complete these and bring them to your appointment if they get sent out to you in advance. You will have the option of meeting in person at Chalmers Centre, via videocall (NearMe) or telephone. It is recommended to attend in person if you can. If attending via video or phone, you will need a quiet and confidential space to speak without distraction.

This process can be daunting and you might be concerned about speaking to someone about your difficulties. The psychologists in the team aim to provide a kind, supportive and non-judgemental space to help you talk openly and honestly about your difficulties. They are trained at helping people with a variety of mental health difficulties and specialise in the overlap between physical and mental health.

The aim of the assessment is to work out if therapy is right for you at this time, and if so, whether the Chalmers Psychology service is the best place for you to have this. Sometimes it takes more than one appointment to work this out. At the end of the assessment period the psychologist will aim to collaborate with you to find a plan to help, which may involve scheduling further sessions together, a referral to another service or organisation, some self-help advice, or it may be that no further action is advised right now.

What is therapy?

Therapy is not just talking about things in a supportive space, although this is an important part of it. Therapy is a structured process with the aim of providing meaningful change in your life. It is usually focused on a particular problem, and works by you and the psychologist understanding the problem together, then identifying and challenging the patterns that are keeping the problem going. It is time-limited and will typically have a beginning, middle and end.

What is required of you?

- An openness and curiosity towards yourself, your patterns of thinking and behaviour, and how these have been shaped through your life experience
- A willingness to share your difficulties with a psychologist
- An ability to attend scheduled sessions on a regular basis
- A motivation to change patterns of thinking or behaviour that are keeping you stuck
- Time and willingness to put effort into between-session work. Some change may happen in the sessions, but most of the change will happen from doing things differently in the time *between* sessions.






It is really important that all of these are in place for therapy to be helpful to you. It is an active process and it is important to consider whether it is the right time right now. Just because a referral has been offered does not mean you need to say yes.

What will happen to the information I share?

The information you share is treated with strict confidentiality. However, (in line with NHS Lothian policy), there are some important exceptions which are necessary to ensure the safety of all who access the service.

- The psychologist will write brief digital session notes on a hospital system exclusive to Chalmers. This means that clinicians involved in your care in Chalmers will have access to them.
- The psychologist works as part of a team including doctors, nurses and pharmacists and may speak with them about your care, where this is deemed to be in your best interest.
- The psychologist will write a summary letter to the clinician who referred you, which outlines the assessment and plan. They also write one at the end of therapy sessions. Letters will be shared with your GP and/or other relevant clinicians *unless you disagree*.
- Should the psychologist have a serious concern about your safety or that of someone else, they are duty bound to break confidentiality and speak to whomever they need to speak to, to help keep you safe.

Helpful support lines and websites

<p>Edinburgh Crisis Centre on 0808 801 0414. They are open 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week and provide a telephone helpline to the people of Edinburgh aged 18 and over who use or have used mental health services and their carers. www.edinburghcrisiscentre.org.uk</p>	
<p>Samaritans on 116 123. They are open 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week and your call will be answered by a trained advisor. You can e-mail them at jo@samaritans.org. www.samaritans.org</p>	
<p>Breathing Space is a free helpline open 6pm-2am Monday to Friday and 24 hrs a day from Friday evening to Monday morning on 0800 83 85 87. www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk</p>	
<p>Mental Health Assessment Service (MHAS) based between the Royal Edinburgh Hospital (REH) and the New Edinburgh Royal Infirmary (NREI) operates 24 hrs per day, 365 days of the year 0131 537 6000.</p>	
<p>NHS 24 is a general medical helpline on short code 111. www.nhs24.scot</p>	
<p>Switchboard is an LGBTQIA+ support service. They have a free helpline open from 10am-10pm most days on 0800 00119 100 and an online chat available at: www.switchboard.lgbt/contact-us</p>	
<p>Rape Crisis Scotland provides a crisis helpline, email support and local centre support for anyone affected by sexual violence. Call them on 08088 01 03 02 (6pm to midnight, 7 days a week).</p>	

Lothian Sexual and Reproductive Services
2a Chalmers Street
Edinburgh
EH39ES

It's OK to Ask

When you understand what's going on with your health, you can make better decisions around your care and treatment.

www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/its-ok-to-ask/



SCAN ME