



University Hospitals Bristol **NHS**

NHS Foundation Trust

Patient Information Service
Psychological Health Services

Clinical Psychology at the Gynaecological Cancer Centre



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What is a clinical psychologist?

A clinical psychologist is someone who works with people, who are experiencing various kinds of psychological difficulties, in order to reduce distress and promote well-being. Clinical psychologists begin their training in understanding how people think, feel and act by studying theories of normal human development and behaviour. They then undertake further specialist training in different problems that people may experience and the variety of psychological approaches that can be of help. They train for at least six years before qualifying. When working in hospital settings they specialise in helping people affected by physical problems or illness. Clinical Psychologists do not give medical advice or prescribe medication.

Why is there a clinical psychologist in the Gynaecological Cancer Centre team?

The NHS recognises that distress can be a normal response to the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and that good psychological care from every healthcare worker is an important aspect of overall care. However, sometimes people experience particular difficulties or distress and need extra, more specialist support.

How can the clinical psychologist help me?

One of the things the clinical psychologist does is to help women and those close to them to adapt to the impact of gynaecological cancers. Talking with the clinical psychologist can help with things such as:

- Making sense of how you have been feeling
- Adapting to and coping with physical illness
- Managing feelings such as anxiety, sadness, anger, loss and depression
- Learning ways to cope with and prepare for tests, procedures and treatments
- Making decisions about treatment
- Managing worries and living with uncertainty
- Finding ways to solve problems and make use of your own strengths and skills
- Relationship difficulties
- Sexual difficulties
- Moving forward with life after treatment has finished.

How can I arrange to see the clinical psychologist?

Usually, you would be referred to the clinical psychologist by members of staff at the Gynaecological Cancer Centre or by other health professionals. Once a referral has been made, you will be contacted and offered an outpatient appointment. If you are an inpatient, the clinical psychologist will visit you on the ward. You can meet with the clinical psychologist on your own or with a family member.

What will happen at my first appointment?

During your first outpatient appointment the clinical psychologist will usually make a full assessment of your problems which will take about 1 - 1½ hours. This will involve a detailed discussion about your present difficulties, including their effect on your daily life, how and when they arose, as well as considering aspects of your previous or early life. Following assessment, the clinical psychologist will work with you to reach an understanding of your problems and will discuss with you appropriate ways forward to reduce or resolve your difficulties. You will be actively involved in whatever sort of therapy is agreed. Subsequent appointments will last for about 50 minutes to **one hour**.

How long will I need to see the clinical psychologist?

Some problems can be dealt with successfully in a few sessions, and it may be possible to give you an estimate of how many sessions you will need. Other more complex difficulties may need more intensive and/or longer treatment. Please ask if you are not clear about the number of sessions that have been agreed, or how long the treatment will take.

The clinical psychologist will review your progress with you from time to time, and you can raise any doubts or concerns you have at any stage. Ending treatment will be discussed with you and usually involves spacing out your appointments at longer intervals and/or arranging a follow-up after a few months to check that your progress is continuing.

What if I need further help later?

Sometimes people need further sessions at a later date. If this arises, we will be happy to see you again without you needing to be re-referred to the service.

Confidentiality

The clinical psychologist is part of your care team. This means that some information may be shared with other staff who are closely involved with your care if it is appropriate and helpful to do so. We will always do our best to keep what you tell us confidential. If you have any particular concerns about confidentiality, please let us know.

However, if we believe that there is a risk of harm to you or others we may need to pass this information on to relevant agencies; in this case we would talk with you before doing so.

What happens to the information that I tell you?

We will write short notes in your medical file to let your care team know that we are meeting with you, and a brief letter to the person who referred you, your hospital consultant, your GP and others involved in your care following our initial assessment and when treatment finishes. More detailed, separate, psychology notes are kept securely and confidentially; correspondence will be filed with both sets of notes.

Clinical psychology at the Gynaecological Cancer Centre

The clinical psychology service at the Gynaecological Cancer Centre is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Contact Details:

Address: Gynaecological Cancer Centre
St Michael's Hospital
Southwell Street
Bristol BS2 8EG

Telephone: 0117 342 5791 (Secretary)

Cancellations: There is a heavy demand for the psychology service. If you are unable to attend an appointment please telephone **0117 342 5791** so that we can offer that time to another person. We will then re-arrange your appointment.

Access: We recognise that everyone is unique and we do our best to respect and address individual needs; so please let us know how we can help you to access the clinical psychology service.

Best Practice: Clinical Psychologists' practice is informed by research and is regularly evaluated. Regular clinical supervision is given high priority.

What if I am not satisfied with the service I receive?

If you have concerns about the service you receive, please discuss these with your clinical psychologist. If you are still unhappy, you can speak to the Head of Adult Psychological Health Services at the Bristol Haematology and Oncology Centre (0117 342 2885). Alternatively, you can contact the Patient Support and Complaints Team on 0117 342 3604.

Notes / Queries

Psychological Health Services

**For access to other patient leaflets and information
please go to the following address:**

**[www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-visitors-and-carers/
patient-information.html](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-visitors-and-carers/patient-information.html)**

Hospital Switchboard: 0117 923 0000



Minicom: 0117 934 9869



www.uhbristol.nhs.uk



For an Interpreter or Signer please contact the
telephone number on your appointment letter.



For this leaflet in Large Print, Braille, Audio, or
Email, please call the Patient Information Service:



0117 342 3728 / 3725

