

# building a caring future

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## The Obstetrics and Gynaecology Health Psychology Service

Issued by the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department



# Psychological therapy

Everyone has different strategies for coping with difficulty. People often cope with stressful situations and events by talking to their partner, a family member or a friend. However, in certain situations, talking to a professional may prove more helpful. Talking therapies can help you understand what is happening to you, help you work through your difficult feelings and develop strategies for coping better.

Our Health Psychology team are trained to help people deal with emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced during and after pregnancy, in relation to labour and in connection with gynaecological problems.

## What sort of problems do we help with?

- Women who are experiencing anxiety, mood problems or adjustment difficulties as a result of pregnancy.
- Fear or phobia related specifically to pregnancy for example giving birth, undergoing examinations, needles or receiving blood tests.
- When being pregnant brings back issues from the past for example abuse or neglect.
- Anxiety related to obstetric or gynaecological procedures.
- Women who have experienced a traumatic delivery.
- Shock and distress when things do not go as expected.
- Coming to terms with miscarriage, stillbirth or termination due to foetal abnormality.
- Pregnancy decision making.
- Psychological and psychosexual issues related to gynaecological conditions.
- Painful sex or loss of libido after childbirth.

## **Who can refer me?**

If you have been an inpatient or outpatient of obstetrics & gynaecology within the last six months you can be referred by a member of staff, including midwives and doctors or you can contact the service directly by ringing **01670 564149**.

## **What will happen after I have been referred?**

After we have received your referral we will contact you either by telephone or letter. For some people this telephone discussion is enough. Others are just looking for helpful information that we can talk through or send them. We also offer psychological assessment to explore issues in more detail and then this can be followed by a talking therapy if you think that this would be helpful.

We have a waiting list for therapy and aim to see people within three months of receiving the referral, but it is often sooner than this.

## **What will happen next?**

If you decide you would like to be seen you will be offered an assessment appointment at one of our clinics in Wansbeck General Hospital, North Tyneside General Hospital or one of our community bases. You are welcome to bring someone with you to your first appointment. Ongoing therapy usually happens on an individual basis but we also work with couples.

You will be sent a questionnaire with your appointment letter which asks some common questions and will give us a helpful indication of your problems. It saves time in the session if you can fill this in before you come but if it upsets you, or seems difficult, then you do not need to complete it but please bring it to your first appointment.

Your first appointment will last for approximately fifty minutes. The purpose of this appointment and perhaps the next one or two will be to work with you on understanding your situation. The psychological therapist will spend some time finding out what your difficulties are, what you would like help with and how many sessions you will need. As a guide, we tend to see people for 2 to 24 sessions of therapy.

Appointments are usually arranged between 9am and 5pm and may take place once a week, once a fortnight or further apart. You may be asked to carry out tasks between your sessions in order to make changes.

### **Can I bring someone with me to the appointment?**

Yes you can bring someone with you especially to your first appointment if you want to, and if you have a baby you can both come along. You and your therapist will decide together whether it is helpful or not to bring anyone to subsequent appointments.

### **Who else will know I am seeing a psychological therapist?**

We fully understand that you may not want other people to know about the things that you discuss during your sessions. The things you discuss with your therapist will remain in confidence as long as it does not indicate any risk to yourself or another person and does not break the law. Your therapist will write to your doctor and other relevant health professionals working with you at the beginning of therapy and on completion of your work together. You will receive a copy of this letter unless you don't want one and if there is any information which you do not want anyone else to know about, you will be able to discuss this with your therapist.

## What kind of therapy will I have?

We offer a range of psychological interventions and we will talk to you more about types of therapy available. We tailor therapy to meet individual needs; sometimes using a general approach and sometimes using a more specific intervention. So that you can think about what might suit you best, or so that you can do some research yourself if you want to, examples would be:

**Cognitive Behavioural Therapy:** this therapy aims to help people change patterns of thinking and behaving that are causing problems. This is because changing how we think or behave, also changes how we feel.

**Cognitive Analytical Therapy:** this therapy explores the patterns of coping that we developed, probably in our early life, that are now not working so well and causing us to feel stuck.

**Behaviour Therapy:** with some problems, especially phobias and some sexual problems, it is helpful to face these fears in a graded way, practicing having exposure to the things that frighten us.

Sometimes however, just having the space to talk, and be listened to, with someone who is impartial can help us problem solve or manage something difficult in a different way. In these situations we use a general psychological approach or educational interventions to help you with your problems.

## **What if I can't make one of my appointments?**

We understand that keeping appointments can be an additional stress when you are having difficulties and we aim to make our service as accessible as possible. It is important that you attend appointments however and that you tell us as soon as you can if you are unable to attend by contacting us on **01670 564149**. We are unable to keep offering appointments if your attendance is poor.

## **What if I want to comment on the service or make a complaint?**

The Obstetric and Gynaecology Health Psychology team aim to provide you with a good service. You can help us to do that by telling us about things that you have liked or disliked both in your sessions and at the end of therapy when you will be sent an evaluation questionnaire. Please do complete the patient satisfaction questionnaire as we use the information you give us to help us continually develop and improve our service.

## **What if I have a question that isn't answered here?**

You can contact us between 9am and 5pm:

**Telephone: 01670 564149**

The Health Psychology Team  
Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology  
Wansbeck General Hospital  
Woodhorn Lane  
Ashington  
NE63 9JJ

## **Alternative Formats**

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

## **Other sources of information**

### **NHS 111**

### **NHS Choices**

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### **NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)**

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 01670 511098

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### **Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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