

Health Psychology Service for adults and young people with haemophilia

This leaflet provides you with information about the service, how we can help you and how to contact us.

What is the Health Psychology Service (HPS)?

The HPS provides support for patients with haematological (blood) disorders at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. It was founded in 1997 and has since served a large population.

The HPS offers a variety of services for adults and young people (over the age of 16) with haemophilia, as well as their families. These services are led by health/clinical psychologists and are free of charge. Psychologists are trained healthcare professionals who help people to manage their emotional concerns over a specific period of time. They do **not** prescribe medication. The HPS works with other members of the haemophilia team, including haematologists and nurse specialists, who are trained to meet the needs of patients with haemophilia. We are part of MDT Hep C and bleeding disorders clinic

How can the service help me?

The psychologists can provide support and help you to:

- learn to live with haemophilia
- cope with pain in hospital and at home
- cope with a disability
- deal with employment concerns, including providing career and educational advice
- build your self-confidence
- make decisions about treatment options
- cope with treatment medicines
- cope with living with HIV and/or Hepatitis C

- make choices about having or not having children
- deal with sexual concerns
- manage family and relationship problems
- deal with emotional problems (such as depression and anxiety)
- adjust to being in hospital or having to come into hospital frequently.

How does the service work?

If you would like psychological support, please speak to your nurse about referral. You can also be referred by your GP, haematologist, school or voluntary organisation.

Alternatively, you can contact the service yourself by phone or letter to request an appointment, or come to one of our drop-in clinics (see page 4 for more information).

What happens at my first appointment?

Your first appointment can take up to an hour and a half. The psychologist will talk to you about your concerns and usual ways of coping with them. He/she will then make an assessment and tell you whether a series of psychological support sessions are likely to be helpful. These may be for you, your family or partner. Appointments are arranged between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. They usually last for one hour and they take place in the Haemophilia Centre, 1st Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

Ways to help

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

One important way to help patients is through Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

In CBT the psychologist helps you to identify problems and search for solutions. It helps you to link your thinking patterns, beliefs, emotions and behaviour. You could also be given self-help assignments, for example keeping a diary to monitor your mood. These can help you to learn to deal with your problems.

CBT focuses particularly on positive life skills, including:

- accepting your physical condition and limitations
- identifying your strengths, talents and weaknesses
- improving your self-confidence and self-esteem
- learning to put yourself in control of your illness
- understanding how your behaviour may affect your health and life.

How many appointments for CBT will I need?

This varies from person to person. You can stop seeing the psychologist any time you like, but we hope this will be after your concerns have been resolved.

About six months after you stop seeing the psychologist, we will write to you and invite you to come in for a follow-up appointment. This enables us to identify any new difficulties and provide further support, if needed.

Drop-in service

The HPS also offers a drop-in service where you can come in to see one of the psychologists without an appointment. The drop-in service is an opportunity for you to raise any concerns you might have. Following this discussion, you and the psychologist can decide the best way to help you with your concerns.

The drop-in service runs every Wednesday from 2pm to 3pm on a first come, first served basis. Please come to the reception desk, Department of Haematology, 4th Floor, Southwark Wing, Guy's Hospital.

Neuropsychological assessment

This is another way we can help patients. A neuropsychological assessment measures changes in your cognitive abilities, such as memory, concentration and problem solving. It shows what your strengths and limitations are, so we can work with you to find ways of coping. This can help you in your everyday activities, working life or studies.

For people with haemophilia, changes in cognitive abilities can be related to a variety of things. These include associated chronic conditions and their treatments (such as interferon), anxiety, stress and depression.

Neuropsychological assessment is made up of several spoken, written and puzzle-type tasks. These are designed to assess skills and thought processes such as:

- reading ability
- memory
- language skills
- concentration
- problem-solving skills
- perception (interpreting what we see).

The length of assessment can vary, but normally takes about five hours. You can have the assessment in one day (with short breaks) or over a few separate appointments. After the assessment we will invite you to a further appointment. This is to discuss the results and explore ways in which you can cope with your difficulties.

Confidentiality and privacy

Your visits are **private** and **confidential**. However, to improve the quality of the service you receive, we will tell the haemophilia team that you are receiving psychological support and, if you agree, your GP. We will also tell them when your therapy has ended. This is the only information that we will provide without your permission. If we want to talk to other people, for example a teacher, tutor or employer, we will only do so **if you have agreed to it**.

The service regularly takes on postgraduate trainees and undergraduate psychologists. The students are supervised by qualified staff and given the opportunity to see therapy in practice. If you do not want students to be present, then please let us know. Your wishes will always be respected and your care will not be affected in any way.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you would like to know more about the HPS for adults and adolescents with haemophilia and other blood disorders, please contact:

Dr Nicky Veronica Thomas, consultant health psychologist and head of service on:

t: 020 7188 2725 **e:** nicky.thomas@gstt.nhs.uk

Dr Heather Rawle, clinical health psychologist on:

t: 020 7188 2718 **e:** heather.rawle@gstt.nhs.uk

Mina Abedian, health psychologist on:

t: 020 7188 2718 **m:** 07825 282 083

e: mina.abedian@gstt.nhs.uk

Department of Haematology

4th Floor, Southwark Wing

Guy's Hospital

Great Maze Pond

London SE1 9RT

Haemophilia Centre

Centre for Haemostasis and Thrombosis

1st Floor, North Wing

St Thomas' Hospital

Westminster Bridge Road

London SE1 7EH

Contact us

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's
e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)

For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

t: 020 7188 3416

Language support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health. **w:** www.nhs.uk

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