

Psychological Service

For people living with HIV



Information for patients

Department of Psychological Services



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



This leaflet describes the Psychological Service for people living with HIV receiving care within Sexual Health Sheffield or from E-Floor of the Royal Hallamshire Hospital. The information may help you to decide whether you would like to access the Service.

How can psychology help?

We work with people whose difficulties are related to their HIV status. Types of difficulties that we can help with include:

- adjusting to your diagnosis and treatment
- feeling low in mood
- worrying a lot of the time
- concerns about how HIV is affecting your relationships
- finding it difficult to take medication
- concerns about your memory and concentration

These are just examples. You may have other concerns.

We use a range of talking therapies to help people understand their current difficulties and find ways to make changes in their day to day lives. We can also carry out tests to assess difficulties or concerns about memory or concentration. We treat every person as an individual, so the type of support we offer will vary from person to person.

What is the difference between psychologists and psychiatrists?

Psychologists use talking therapies. We do not prescribe medication, or carry out physical examinations.

By contrast, psychiatrists are trained as medical doctors specialising in mental health and can prescribe medication.

It may be helpful for some people to have support from both services.

What happens at a first appointment?

The first appointment will be an assessment session, lasting up to an hour and a half. We aim to offer this within 5 weeks of receiving your referral. The main focus of the first session is to gain an understanding of what your current concerns and difficulties are, and to consider the impact that HIV is having on your life. As part of this we may ask you to complete some questionnaires about how you are feeling. During this session we will decide together what kind of support would be most useful for you.

It may be that another service would be more suitable for your needs. If so, we can help to arrange this for you.

What happens next?

If we decide together that this is the right service for you, you will be placed on the waiting list for therapy. We will contact you as soon as an appointment becomes available.

Some people find that they feel better after one or two sessions. Other people find it helpful to meet regularly for a longer time. We will discuss this with you at the beginning of our work together and review how it is going on a regular basis.

What about confidentiality?

Whatever you talk about will be kept confidential. We work closely as a team and we will write or talk to other health professionals directly involved in your care if we think this would be helpful for you.

We will not talk to anyone outside of this department about you without having your consent to do so.

However, we must share information if we are concerned that you, or someone you told us about, were at risk of being harmed in some way.

If this happened, we would always try to discuss this with you before talking to anyone else about it.

How can I be referred to see a psychologist?

Any member of staff within Sexual Health Sheffield or on E Floor (Royal Hallamshire Hospital) can refer you. This could be a doctor, nurse or health advisor. They will ask whether you prefer to be contacted by phone or letter. We will then contact you as soon as possible to offer you an appointment. If the gender of the psychologist is important to you then please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Further Information

If you have any initial questions or concerns about the service please contact:

Dr Adam Saradjian

Principal Clinical Psychologist
Sexual Health & HIV Service Lead
Royal Hallamshire Hospital
Glossop Road
Sheffield, S10 2JF

Tel: **0114 271 3555**

If you have any further concerns about the service please contact:

The Service Manager

Department of Psychological
Services
Room G04, 3rd Floor
Nurses Home
Northern General Hospital
Herries Road
Sheffield, S5 7AU

Tel: **0114 271 5736**

Alternative formats can be available on request.

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