

Physical ill health

Taking care of your emotional health



Information for patients

Department of Psychological Services



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



Psychological and physical health are so completely linked that we need to take a 'whole person' approach rather than try to separate them.

Making the links between the body and mind

Many of us at some time during our lives may have a serious physical illness. Both the illness and the treatment for it are likely to influence the way we think and feel. Having a serious physical illness is likely to affect:

- Relationships
- Work
- Spiritual faith and beliefs
- Confidence and self esteem
- How we feel socially

Having a serious illness can make us feel sad, worried, frightened and angry.

How can I help myself?

Top tips

- Share your fears and concerns with people close to you; talking is likely to give you a sense of relief. If you don't have access to friends or relatives ask if there are support groups related to your physical health problem.
- Prepare yourself for meetings with doctors, including your GP and other health professionals. Make a list of questions that niggle or trouble you. Don't be scared to ask.
- Try to eat a balanced diet, being under or overweight will cause you additional stress.

- Make sure you keep active at an appropriate level. This can sometimes be hard, but evidence suggests that in almost all physical health conditions exercise is key to recovery. Ask for medical advice about what is appropriate.

What's normal?

There are times during physical illness when we would expect people to feel very anxious or very low:

- When you first learn about your illness or diagnosis
- After having major surgery
- When dealing with the unpleasant side effects of medication
- If an illness comes back after you seem to recover
- If your illness stops responding to treatment

Feeling low or anxious at these times is normal; a part of adjustment and adaptation. But, if symptoms of depression or anxiety are troubling and persist don't be afraid to ask your GP for help.

Keeping active

- Remember rest is an activity
- Don't blame yourself for being lazy or feeble
- Try and keep yourself as active as you can, follow the recommendations of your health care provider (e.g. GP, Medical Consultant, Nurse or Physiotherapist)
- Make sure you allow yourself some pleasure and leisure - "activities" does not only mean work
- Set yourself some short and medium term goals if you are recovering from an illness
- Make sure your friends and family are aware of your goals

Other ideas - keeping a mood diary can help you to keep a lookout for times when you may feel low in mood, or what helps you to cope

Asking for help

Arthritis Care

Helpline: **0808 800 4050**

Website: **<https://www.arthritiscare.org.uk>**

Provides information and support for patients with arthritis and their families and carers.

British Heart Foundation

Heart information line: **0300 330 3311**

Website: **www.bhf.org.uk**

Supports research into and provides information on heart disease, including depression and the heart.

Kidney Care UK

Website: **www.kidneycareuk.org**

Information and support for patients with kidney disease.

British Lung Foundation

Helpline: **03000 030 555**

Website: **<https://www.blf.org.uk>**

Information, support and understanding for people affected by lung disease, including the Breathe Easy support network.

Epilepsy Action

Helpline: **0808 800 5050**

Website: **<https://www.epilepsy.org.uk>**

Provides information for people with epilepsy, including information on epilepsy and depression, and a telephone and email helpline.

Sheffield MIND

Tel: **0114 258 4489**

Website: **www.sheffieldmind.co.uk**

The leading mental health charity for England and Wales. Providing information and local support.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society

Helpline: **0808 800 8000**

Website: **www.mssociety.org.uk**

Provides information on multiple sclerosis (MS), including MS and depression.

Samaritans

Helpline: **116 123**

Website: **www.samaritans.org**

National organisation offering support to those in distress who feel suicidal or despairing and need someone to talk to. The telephone number of your local branch can be found in the telephone directory.

SANEline

Helpline: **0300 304 7000** (4.30pm - 10.30pm)

Website: **www.sane.org.uk**

National telephone helpline offering practical information and emotional support to anyone affected by mental health issues.

UK National Kidney Federation

Helpline: **0800 169 09 36**

Website: **www.kidney.org.uk**

Provides support services for patients with kidney disease.

Caring for carers

Carers can also get information and support from the above help lines. There is also the Carers Centre in Sheffield that can provide advice and support, as well as information about benefits, financial and practical issues.

Sheffield Carers Centre

Ground Floor East, Concept House, 5 Young Street, Sheffield S1 4UP

Helpline **0114 272 8362**

Website: **www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk**



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