



Clinical psychology in the Scottish Pulmonary Vascular Unit (SPVU)

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Version 2

About this leaflet

This leaflet provides information about the Clinical Psychology Service in the Scottish Pulmonary Vascular Unit (SPVU).

This will give you information about what support is available to you, how you can access this and answers to some common questions you may have.

What is a clinical psychologist?

A Clinical Psychologist is a specialist who has been trained to help people who are experiencing some distress or difficulty in their life.

All Clinical Psychologists have completed professional training which lasts a minimum of 6 years.

Clinical Psychologists are not psychiatrists or medical doctors. They do not prescribe drugs, but are trained in talking therapies, which focus on exploring your current difficulties to help you understand how they came about and put them into perspective.

They will also suggest practical ideas and different ways of approaching your current problems. Unlike psychiatrists, the team will not prescribe medication.

Why might someone see the clinical psychologist in the SPVU?

Living with Pulmonary Hypertension and its treatment can bring about many challenges and cause you to have different thoughts, feelings and responses.

These may include:

- Distress
- Worry about the future
- Frustration
- Feeling down
- Constantly on edge
- Negative feelings about yourself

Pulmonary Hypertension can also affect close relationships, how you live your daily life and could impact your career, hobbies and interests.

You may also find that you are apprehensive or are struggling to cope with your medical treatments or appointments.

You might have trouble with your sleep, for example due to breathlessness, feelings of depression or anxiety.

These are just a few things which you may experience, everyone is individual and may experience other issues, which our Clinical Psychologist may be able to support you with.

How do I know if I need help?

Whilst a degree of emotional distress is normal when living with Pulmonary Hypertension, almost half of people experience symptoms serious enough they could seek professional help for them.

This will usually happen when you begin to feel as though your thoughts and the difficulties associated with the condition become more prominent, overbearing and you feel they are seriously impacting your life.

Our Clinical Psychologist can help make these difficulties more manageable and can help in the following ways:

- Talk through any problems you are having with coming to terms with your diagnosis.
- Help you understand your emotional reactions.
- Support you in making difficult decisions about your treatment.
- Work with you to manage any worries and fears you have relating to Pulmonary Hypertension including your future, upcoming procedures and your long term prognosis.
- Help you cope with symptoms of anxiety and depression following your diagnosis, such as:
 - Not being able to enjoy daily activities or struggling to find them interesting.
 - Feeling preoccupied with your condition and unable to stop worrying.
 - Becoming easily angry or irritated.
 - Struggling to connect with others.
 - Losing confidence and avoiding certain situations.
- Work with the other members of the SPVU team to make sure you have the support you need.

How can I be referred to the Clinical Psychology service?

If you would like to speak to a Clinical Psychologist, you can:

- Call us directly on **0141 951 5369** or
- Talk to any member of the SPVU team members and they can refer you to our service.

What should you expect at your first appointment?

Your first appointment is called an initial assessment: this is your chance to tell the Clinical Psychologist about your current situation and what has brought you to them.

This may include difficulties or concerns you have about adjusting to and living with Pulmonary Hypertension, the impact of these issues on you and those close to you, and any other problems that seem relevant. The Clinical Psychologist may spend more than one appointment with you gathering this information.

This is to help them to get to know you, better understand your current situation and how you are managing. This will allow them to consider your situation and what would be most beneficial to you.

The outcome of the assessment might be further psychological therapy in our service, support from another service, or it may be decided that neither of these options are appropriate. You can ask any questions you may have during the appointments.

Outpatient appointments usually last up to an hour, but can be shorter if this is too much for you. If we see you as an inpatient, it will probably be a shorter appointment, depending on how you are feeling.

What will happen next?

Sometimes people only see the Clinical Psychologist for a few sessions and in some cases for many more than this.

After the first few sessions, the Clinical Psychologist will work with you to devise a treatment plan about how to approach your problems.

This may involve meeting for further sessions to talk about your reactions to situations and how you have coped, how you view and think about important areas of your life, and what you are feeling.

You will be asked to complete some assessment forms about your progress to help monitor this throughout your treatment.

In some instances, another person or organisation may be suggested as more appropriate to help you.

Do I have to talk about everything with the Clinical Psychologist?

The Clinical Psychologist will ask you questions about your current situation and the concerns and difficulties related to your Pulmonary Hypertension.

To help us get a good understanding of you and your problems, we will ask you about issues other than your Pulmonary Hypertension, for example, your usual ways of coping with difficult things, other current stresses in your life, and your family and relationships if this is relevant.

You do not have to answer all the questions if you prefer not to talk about a particular issue and we will respect your decision. It helps, however, if you can be as honest and open as possible.

Where will I be seen?

The Clinical Psychology Service is based at the Golden Jubilee University National Hospital. We offer a mix of outpatient and inpatient appointments. Outpatient appointments can be arranged in a clinic at the Golden Jubilee University National Hospital but can also take place remotely, i.e. via telephone or video calls. We can also see people on inpatient wards at the Golden Jubilee University National Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital.

What should I do if I cannot attend an appointment?

Please contact the Clinical Psychology Service on 0141 951 5369 as soon as you can. We will try to rearrange your appointment at a more convenient time for you.

If you no longer want an appointment with the Clinical Psychologist, please let us know as this will enable us to offer this appointment to someone else.

Additional support

If you require help urgently, please contact your GP in the first instance or call NHS 24 on 111 for out of hours support.

Support is also available from Breathing Space, which provides a free, confidential telephone service for anyone in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety. Breathing space: 0800 83 85 87.

Further information and self-help guides for common mental health problems are available via NHS Inform online at:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/symptoms-and-self-help/self-help-guides>.

Urgent help

If you are feeling distressed, in a state of despair, suicidal or in need of emotional support, you can phone NHS 24 on 111. For an emergency ambulance, phone 999.

Contact

If you need to contact the Clinical Psychology service, please email, telephone, or write to:

Psychological Therapies Service
Golden Jubilee University National Hospital
Agamemnon Street, Clydebank, G81 4DY

Telephone: 0141 951 5369

Email: gjnh.psychology@gjnh.scot.nhs.uk

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 : **0141 951 5513**