

# your information...

## For a Better View contact:

### ***What if I have more questions or comments.....?***

If you have any questions, concerns or comments - the Clinical Psychologist will be happy to discuss these with you at your first appointment. Alternatively, you can contact the service by telephone or letter:

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## **CARDIOLOGY - SEEING A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST**



**A Better View... of adult services**



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## ***Why see a Clinical Psychologist?***

Many people who have experienced a heart attack; heart surgery or other cardiac difficulties tell us that this has had a major impact upon their everyday lives. As a result patients may describe feelings such as anxiety and low mood. Clinical Psychology input aims to help with negative emotions, such as anxiety; depression; fear-avoidance; fears of recurrence; etc, and to assess and work on how these are affecting you within your everyday life.

More and more Clinical Psychologists are now working in medical settings, as there is an increased awareness of the emotional distress that can be experienced in relation to physical health problems.

Talking with someone about how you are thinking and feeling is often the first step to identifying how things can then change.

## ***What will happen at my first appointment?***

Your first appointment will usually be spent talking about the difficulties you have in relation to your cardiac health. This will probably last for about an hour. Sometimes it may be relevant to talk about past issues as well as the present. The Psychologist may also go through some short questionnaires to measure your mood at the present time.

Before the first appointment, people sometimes worry about the session, e.g; whether they will cry or not, or whether they will be able to find the right words to explain how they feel. These feelings are understandable. Clinical Psychologists are sensitive to these feelings and are trained to help you cope.

## ***What will happen next?***

You may need to meet several times with your Psychologist to

decide how best to move forward. Together you will discuss how you could best work, and this usually involves contracting some individual therapy sessions. These sessions usually involve meeting on a regular basis, perhaps fortnightly, to identify and work through the negative thoughts and feelings you are having about your condition. The purpose of this is to help to alleviate any feelings of anxiety and low mood, etc and to give you an increased sense of coping. It may be that simply providing information about emotions and coping, etc. may be enough for you at the present time.

Where adjusting to the heart problems does not seem to be the main concern, we may discuss a referral on to a more appropriate service.

## ***Is it confidential?***

The Clinical Psychologist will keep confidential written notes in a Psychology file, which is separate to your medical notes. These will be kept locked away in a filing cabinet only accessible by Psychology.

After the assessment, a letter is usually sent to your GP and referrer detailing the main points of the assessment and the agreed next steps. If we do agree to meet regularly for therapy sessions, a summary of the work we do will also be sent at the end of your therapy contract. In most cases, you will be asked if you would like to receive copies of any letters.

In rare circumstances, e.g.; when someone seems to be in serious danger of harming themselves/or others, the Clinical Psychologist is required to inform other professionals to make sure that the people involved are kept safe. Before doing this, the Clinical Psychologist would always try to discuss this with you first.