

# Haemato-oncology Counselling and Psychology Service

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## Information for patients

We see haematology patients of King's College Hospital and Princess Royal University Hospital who are having treatment for a blood or lymphatic cancer, or a bone marrow failure disorder such as aplastic anaemia or myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS). We also provide support for their relatives and carers.

This leaflet explains the support our service provides, what the counselling and psychology team can help you with and how to use the service.

## What does the service offer?

We are a specialist team of psychotherapists and psychologists who offer a range of talking therapies and psychological support, including counselling. We help people at any stage of their care.

Blood cancers, bone marrow failure disorders and their treatments, such as chemotherapy and bone marrow / stem cell transplants, affect the whole of you, not just your body. Many find the emotional aspects of their illness the most difficult to cope with and say that it can feel like they are on an emotional rollercoaster. Your relatives and carers can also be affected emotionally by the effects of your illness.

Many people learn to cope in their own way, using their own resources. But it can sometimes be helpful to discuss things in confidence with someone who is not a family member or a close friend.

## How can counselling and psychology help me?

Talking therapy can help you to explore, process and make sense of your concerns and emotional difficulties. These can include:

- adjusting to your diagnosis and the changes and losses it has brought
- coping with the symptoms of the illness
- coping with the side effects of treatments, such as fatigue, infections, pain, sickness and lowered fertility
- managing feelings such as low mood or depression, anxiety, shock and anger
- coping with long periods in hospital and in isolation
- making difficult decisions about treatment



- managing the demands of home and family life while caring for yourself
- coping with the effects of your illness on relationships or sexual intimacy
- managing concerns about your body image and how you look
- handling feelings of low self-esteem, such as feeling like you are useless or a burden on others
- worrying about your illness getting worse, relapsing or coming back again
- coping emotionally at the end of treatment or end of life.

## **What happens during my session?**

When you see one of our psychologists or psychotherapists you get the chance to talk with someone who is trained to support your emotional wellbeing. Seeing them does not mean that you are weak or mentally ill.

We provide a safe and confidential space where you can share your thoughts, feelings and concerns. Using talking therapies we may be able to suggest coping strategies. We will discuss with you what you might find the most helpful.

You might only need one or two sessions to make a difference, though you can have more if you need them. We can see your loved ones or carers as well – separately or with you.

We offer virtual consultations (e.g. phone or video calls online) in addition to face-to-face sessions, depending on individual circumstances.

## **How long is each session?**

Each one lasts up to 50 minutes.



## How can I see someone in the Haemato-oncology Counselling and Psychology Service?

If you are having treatment at King's College Hospital or Princess Royal University Hospital for a blood or lymphatic cancer or a bone marrow failure disorder you, your relatives and carers are welcome to call us on **020 3299 5761** or email us on

**kch-tr.haem-onc-psychology@nhs.net**

Or you can ask your clinical nurse specialist (CNS) or doctor to refer you to us.

## Other support at King's

### Macmillan Information and Support Centre

Ground floor, Cicely Saunders Institute, King's College Hospital  
Tel: **020 3299 5229**

## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS:

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

Email: **kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net**

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND Tel: **01689 863252**

Email: **kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net**

**If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.**