

Children's Cancer – Psychology Service Information for Families

What is a Paediatric Clinical Psychologist?

Clinical psychologists have specialist knowledge in child development and emotional and behavioural difficulties in children. They have expertise in working with children and families who are having to adjust to difficult situations such as physical illness.

What does the psychologist do?

We believe that psychological support should go hand in hand with medical care and should be offered to all families.

The psychologist is here to work with children and families who may need help to cope with the many experiences related to being diagnosed with cancer. This could be at any time from diagnosis, throughout treatment or after treatment is over. Psychologists do not prescribe medication and do not perform any physical examinations.

You may wish to meet with us on a one-off occasion, arrange a series of appointments or talk over the telephone. Parents can have time for themselves if there are things they want to talk about without their children being present, and young people can also be seen without their parents if this is what they prefer.

Will our meeting be confidential?

The psychologist will have to tell the doctors that they are seeing your child but the details of what is discussed can be confidential. The exception to this would be if we became worried that your child was at risk, when we would be legally bound to contact the relevant agencies.



Examples of sorts of issues a psychologist can help with:

- Dealing with upsetting news
- Emotional difficulties relating to the medical treatments and their effects
- Managing stress
- Coping with friendships and other relationships
- Feeling different
- Talking over worries and finding solutions
- Finding ways to juggle illness and everyday life
- School difficulties
- Answering questions asked by the child and others about their illness
- Providing parents with support to deal with behavioural difficulties
- Psychological approaches to pain management or managing anxiety about procedures
- The needs of the whole family including brothers and sisters

Neuropsychological testing

Many children with cancer, for example those who have had a brain tumour or received radiotherapy, may benefit from a neuropsychological assessment.

Neuropsychological testing involves carrying out a number of different tasks (e.g. answering questions, doing puzzles and remembering information) with the Clinical Psychologist to look at the way different parts of the brain do different things and work together.

Neuropsychological tests can help identify any difficulties with learning, memory or attention and organisation that some children can experience following treatment. We will also look at what your child's strengths are and then write a report for parents and other professionals. If any problems are identified then we can liaise with the school and recommend strategies to support your child.

If you have any concerns about your child's learning or ability to cope at school following treatment, feel free to discuss this with the team.

How to access the paediatric psychology service

The Clinical Psychologists on the team are **Dr Bob Budd** and **Dr Louise Morgan**. If you would like to make an appointment, please phone the psychology secretary on **01603 287545 (Mon-Fri 9-5pm)**.

