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**INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS**

# Psychology and Sexual Health:

## How might seeing a psychologist help me?

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You may be wondering how seeing a psychologist can help someone with a sexual health or sexual relationship difficulty. This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions you may have.

### Who are we?

We are a small team of psychologists at My Sexual Health, King's Mill Hospital. We are trained to help people understand their concerns and find ways of coping with them, without prescribing medication.

We offer people an opportunity to explore their thoughts and feelings with us, and identify what changes they can make. This may involve learning new skills and approaches to solving problems.

### Who might be helped by seeing a psychologist?

Many people have concerns about sex or experience difficulties in their sexual relationships at some time in their lives. There can sometimes be physical reasons for these difficulties. However, other kinds of issues that can also affect our sexual pleasure and enjoyment include:

- feelings of pressure to live up to expectations of ourselves or our sexual partners

- negative thoughts or feelings about ourselves, our partners or sex itself
- the impact of unwanted, distressing or abusive experiences

For some people, their concerns may be more about their health. For example, they may have been diagnosed with an infection or physical health condition such as HIV, and may need treatment. They may be worried about the impact of their health condition or treatment on their lives.

For others, they may feel unhappy about what they have been doing. They may also be putting themselves at risk of sexually transmitted infections or worry about passing on infections to others.

### What concerns might people talk about with a psychologist?

Specific concerns that people might find helpful to talk about include:

- a lack of sexual desire or sensation
- difficulties with intercourse, or dissatisfaction with sex
- abusive or distressing sexual experiences
- problematic or risky sexual interests, desires or behaviours
- worries about health conditions and their impact

- being diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection
- adjusting to the challenges of living with a physical health condition such as HIV, and managing its treatment
- sharing personal, intimate information with others

There may be other sexual and physical health concerns not listed above that could also be helpful to talk about.

### **Is it a confidential service?**

We treat all information as confidential, and keep care notes separately from other hospital records. We will not share anything you tell us unless there is a genuine need and we have your permission, or we are legally required to do so. You can discuss any questions or concerns you may have about confidentiality with us.

### **How can I see a psychologist?**

If you would like to know more about our service or you feel that you might benefit from seeing a psychologist, please speak to your doctor or nurse. They will provide you with a form to fill in and leave for us to get in contact with you.

### **Contact details**

My Sexual Health,  
King's Mill Hospital  
(Telephone number): 01623 672260

### **Useful websites**

The College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists: [www.cosrt.org.uk](http://www.cosrt.org.uk)

Terrence Higgins Trust: [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)

Self-help leaflets (NHS trust in Northumberland): [www.nw.nhs.uk](http://www.nw.nhs.uk)

### **Further sources of information**

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

### **Patient Experience Team (PET)**

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital** Tel: 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital** Tel: 01636 685692

**Email:** [PET@sfh-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:PET@sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

If you need this information in a different language or format, please contact the PET (as above).

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External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. Stating a web address does not imply we endorse a particular site. Neither does not stating a web address imply lack of endorsement.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email [patient.information@sfh-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@sfh-tr.nhs.uk) or telephone 01623 622515 ext 2715.

All of our hospitals are smoke free and as such you will not be able to smoke anywhere on site including the car parks, pathways and grounds. Please speak to a member of staff if you would like to stop smoking. We can offer advice and refer you to services that support smokers who want to cut down or stop completely

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