

4. Are there any risks?

Talking about your difficulties can be upsetting at times but clinical psychologists aim to reduce distress. You may find that talking to them helps you to be able to make effective changes in the longer term.

Many people are anxious about the first meeting with their psychologist. That is normal. New experiences often make us nervous. But if you have any particular concerns or worries about this, please let the psychologist or another member of the team know.

5. How do I access a clinical psychologist?

You can speak to your doctor or nurse about any concerns you have regarding your mental health or changes in your thinking. They will advise you on whether a referral to a psychologist is appropriate.

There are also groups you can attend at the Movement Disorders Service that include psychological support and information to help you understand your difficulties and improve your wellbeing.

6. What will happen to the information you give us?

Trust is an essential part of your relationship with a psychologist, and confidentiality is central to this. All our staff comply with the law regarding personal information, and are fully aware of their responsibilities and obligations to respect patient confidentiality.

We may share some information with others such as your GP and social service employees.

When considering who may see information about you, we only share information with those who **need to know** and only share the **minimum** information necessary to ensure good quality care.

If you have any further questions about Clinical Psychology in the Movement Disorders Service then please contact:

Dr Peter Diamond
Clinical Psychologist
01225 831 518

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Clinical Psychology at the Movement Disorders Service

Information leaflet

Clara Cross Centre
St Martin's Hospital
Bath
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1. What is a clinical psychologist?

A clinical psychologist understands the different factors which impact on your life. This includes the physical, psychological, and social aspects of your life.

A clinical psychologist will work with you to understand how changes in your health may have an impact on your wellbeing.

Having a movement disorder like Parkinson's or a related condition can mean dealing with a lot of changes. This can affect how you feel and your wellbeing. Clinical psychologists can help you deal with these more effectively.

All clinical psychologists have completed professional training. They are neither psychiatrists nor medical doctors and do not prescribe drugs. They work in partnership with service users to treat and manage their condition.

2. What sort of problems can a psychologist help with?

People with long-term physical health conditions will often have psychological and emotional needs resulting from symptoms they are experiencing, or the impact of their symptoms on daily life.

Some research has also suggested that a lack of the chemical dopamine, which causes the symptoms of many movement disorders, can be a trigger for psychological difficulties.

Common problems that Clinical Psychology in Clara Cross can help with include:

- Low mood (related to your condition)
- Anxiety (about health and social situations related to your condition)
- Apathy (a lack of enthusiasm and emotion for everyday activities)
- Difficulties in relationships
- Adjusting to your diagnosis
- Changes in memory, language, and thinking skills

In some instances the psychologist may suggest that another person or organisation is better able to help you. Any suggestion will always be made with what is best for you in mind.

3. What can I expect when I see a clinical psychologist?

A psychologist will explore how your movement disorder is affecting you by asking you about your thoughts and feelings. They will also be interested to know about other aspects of your life and personal experiences to gain a complete understanding of you as a person, and not just the symptoms you are experiencing.

At the first appointment you and the psychologist will make a plan about any work you will do together. This may involve seeing you alone or with your partner.

You may be asked to keep a brief diary or fill in some questionnaires. If you are experiencing changes in your memory and thinking skills you may be asked to complete some puzzles and tests.

You and the psychologist will then work through strategies, ideas, and practical steps which can help you to manage the difficulties you are experiencing.

Appointments usually last up to 50 minutes. The number of sessions you meet for will depend on the plan agreed between you both but will typically be between 4-6.