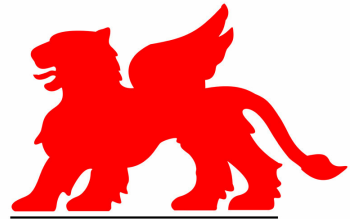


# **Patient Information Leaflet**



**ST MARK'S**  
HOSPITAL

## **Emotional and Psychological Resources**

**at**

## **St Mark's Hospital Psychological Medicine Unit**

The Burdett Institute  
of Gastrointestinal Nursing



## **Emotional and psychological resources at St Mark's Hospital**

St Mark's Hospital has a holistic approach to illness and wellbeing. This means that physical, psychological and social aspects are taken into account in understanding your situation. At St Mark's Hospital nurses, doctors, dieticians and other specialists work closely with psychological therapists to inform your treatment. In meeting with you we aim to understand your problems, expand your ways of coping, and assist you to improve your physical and emotional well-being. Assessment and therapy may also aim at preparing you for procedures and preventing complications following surgery.

Within this philosophy we offer a variety of therapeutic approaches. This begins with referral to one of our talking therapists working in the Psychological Medicine Unit. Referrals are accepted from GPs, practitioners at St Mark's, and other specialists treating patients suffering with gastroenterological conditions

## **Some of the services we offer include:**

### **Preparation for surgery**

Patients undergoing invasive medical procedures or surgery often feel anxious, stressed, fearful, helpless and uncertain. When surgery or a test is planned in advance, we may be able to help to prepare you for the procedure through the use of guided imagery and relaxation training. These are psychological strategies that enhance a patient's ability to cope with medical procedures.

### **Enhancing recovery following surgery**

Patients who have already had tests or surgery may also benefit from our services. Psychotherapists work with patients to understand and manage emotions associated with their illness such as anxiety, fear, depression, pain, stress, anger and helplessness.

### **Assistance towards living with a chronic illness**

The effects of serious illnesses can impose emotional, physical and financial demands on individuals and family members. This can significantly disrupt family life. Talking to one of our therapists can be helpful in relieving anxiety, assisting you to deal with distressing emotions and enhancing coping.

## **Behavioural and talking therapies:**

### **Supportive Counselling including assistance with social problems**

This is available to ward patients (in-patients) who may want to discuss concerns about discharge arrangements, financial or housing problems, or what it is like living with a chronic illness. Some patients may be seen after discharge if this would be helpful.

### **Psychodynamic Therapy**

In this form of therapy together with your therapist you make links between your present circumstances and your past history. The therapist explores with you your usual ways of coping, as well as your current relationships, in the light of your presenting symptoms. This work deepens your understanding of patterns of thinking and behaviour that may have been out of direct awareness and yet be influencing your situation and affecting the choices you are able to make.

This approach may take the form of a series of meetings to understand your difficulties. It may also be longer term and occur in your local NHS psychotherapy service or on occasions at St Mark's Hospital.

## **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)**

This therapy focuses on the inter-relationship between thoughts (cognitions), actions (behaviours) and feelings (affects), and the role they play in exacerbating symptoms. Changes can be made in how a patient thinks, acts and feels, helping to reduce the frequency and intensity of the symptoms.

## **Relaxation Therapy**

This therapy aims to reduce a person's current state of physical and psychological activation and includes progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), autogenic training, and breath regulation. With these techniques a person can learn how to "turn down the volume" on their gut symptoms, becoming more calm and relaxed about them. Guided imagery and CBT are often used together with this therapy.

## **Stress Management**

This therapy seeks to help a person understand the role of stress in his/her life and how it relates to the person's symptoms. It also aims to provide the patient with a variety of ways of dealing with stressful events in ways that minimize their impact on the person's symptoms, enhancing quality of life. Relaxation therapy and guided imagery are often integrated with this treatment.

## **Hypnosis**

Hypnosis or hypnotherapy is a set of techniques designed to help the patient focus their attention and concentration in more positive direction. It creates a very deep state of relaxation and imagining through which the patient becomes open to ideas that may help him or her manage physical complaints.

## **Therapy for patients suffering symptoms as a result of psychological trauma**

This involves using a series of techniques within the CBT and re-processing of information frameworks. The approach aims to alleviate anxiety and flashbacks, intrusive memories, disturbing emotions and physical symptoms that have occurred as a result of the trauma.

## Referrals

If you think you may benefit from the above treatments you are welcome to discuss this with your nurse or doctor who can refer you to the unit.

Referrals to the St Mark's Hospital Psychological Medicine Unit (PMU) need to be made in writing. The address for referrals is as follows:

Dr Julian Stern  
Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy  
Psychological Medicine Unit (PMU)  
St Mark's Hospital  
Watford Road  
Harrow  
Middlesex HA1 3UJ  
Direct telephone number: 0208 235 4017

[www.stmarkshospital.org.uk](http://www.stmarkshospital.org.uk)

The North West London Hospitals' Patients Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a confidential service for people who would like information, help, advice about the services provided. Please call 0800 783 4372 between 9am and 5pm.

Author:	St Mark's Psychological Medicine Unit
Date:	July 2009
Review date:	July 2011