

What to expect from psychology?

The psychology service will talk to you about how you have been feeling and help you to think about what has happened to you.

Sessions take place at St Helens Hospital, and usually last about 50 minutes. There are a range of therapies that could be offered to help you to understand and cope with the emotional impact of IBD.

You are likely to be offered an assessment session in which you will be asked about your experience of IBD, your current difficulties and the impact that this has had on your life. A plan would then be agreed between you and your therapist based upon your hopes and goals.

Useful Contacts:

- **Crohn's and Colitis UK** - A charity that supports people diagnosed with IBD.
Website - www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/
Information Service - 0300 222 5700
Crohn's and Colitis Support (listening service) – 0121 737 9931
- **Rolling Crohn's IBD support group** – A patient led Facebook group for people with IBD and their relatives under the care of St Helens and Whiston Hospitals. This is a private group that can only be viewed by members.

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Psychological support for people living with Inflammatory Bowel Disease

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in alternative languages / formats on request.

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Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatach.

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Living with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

Diagnosis with Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis (the most well-known forms of IBD) can be a difficult process. Although there can be some relief that you have an explanation for the symptoms, you are also faced with the challenge of managing a long-term condition.

Coping with the symptoms, investigations and treatment for IBD can be demanding. IBD can have a considerable impact on people's lives, particularly during flare ups. For example it can:

- Impact work, education, social life, relationships and finances
- Involve continual adjustment to your diet
- Make it difficult for you to do things you enjoy
- Leave you in physical pain or discomfort
- Leave you feeling tired or fatigued
- Result in changes to body image, self-esteem, role or identity
- Result in unpleasant side effects from treatment.

Emotional impact of IBD

Understandably the demands of living with IBD and its treatment may impact upon how you feel emotionally. It is common to feel angry, anxious, embarrassed, guilty, low and stressed amongst many other emotions. There is no right or wrong way to feel and these emotions may come and go. Often these feelings will get better over time or you will feel more able to manage them.

Common concerns

Common concerns reported by people living with IBD include:

- Uncertainty about daily life, symptoms, or future health and treatment.
- Feeling that others do not understand your illness
- Embarrassment over uncontrolled symptoms
- Feeling that you are doing everything "right", but still experience flare-ups
- Coping with fatigue
- Managing pain
- Difficulties gaining or maintaining employment
- Living with a stoma and perceptions of body image
- Concerns about relationships and physical intimacy
- Worries over loss of bowel control, particularly in unfamiliar environments
- Difficulty discussing your illness due to embarrassment or due to others feeling uncomfortable.

Accessing support

If you find that the emotional impact of IBD is beginning to interfere with your daily life, you can discuss this with your nurse, GP or consultant. They can provide support, and discuss the options that are available in your area. This might include: local support groups, counselling services or psychological therapy. There is a Clinical Psychology Service for people living with IBD who are under the care of St Helens & Knowsley NHS Teaching Hospitals.