

ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL, FAIRVIEW

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

Information Sheet on Clinical Psychology

WHAT IS CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Clinical Psychology is a specialised branch of Psychology that applies psychological knowledge and techniques to clinical problems. It aims to help people overcome and/or cope with a wide range of problems such as depression, anxiety, behavioural and interpersonal problems, as well as psychosis. Sometimes Clinical Psychologists may undertake specific assessments/tests to determine cognitive functioning (e.g. poor concentration or memory) or to understand better a person's personality.

WHO WILL I SEE?

You will see a qualified Clinical Psychologist or a Psychologist working under clinical supervision. Any Psychologist you meet will be a member of their professional body, for example The Irish Psychological Society, and will abide by their Professional Code of Practice/Code of Ethics.

ARE SESSIONS CONFIDENTIAL?

Yes. The only time this rule is broken is if there are serious concerns for your safety or that of someone else, or if a legal requirement makes this necessary, and you will be so informed. The Psychologist will however need to give some feedback and information to the person who referred you. You have the right to receive a copy of this if you wish and may also access your medical notes by request under the Freedom of Information Act.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE FIRST MEETING?

The first meeting will focus on the assessment of your current circumstances and difficulties and will usually last for about one hour. You will be asked to describe your current difficulties, and to say a good deal about yourself both now and in the past. You will also be asked about what you would like to be different in your life or what changes you want to make. Often more than one assessment meeting is necessary and sometimes the Psychologist may ask you to complete some questionnaires or psychometric tests.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER ASSESSMENT?

Once the assessment is complete, a decision is made with you as to what kind of further treatment or intervention might be helpful. If, for example, therapy is offered this will be discussed with you in detail. The person who assesses you may not be the same person you see for regular treatment and there is usually a waiting period between initial assessment and a course of treatment being offered.

WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO FILL IN AN 'OPT IN' FORM?

This helps us to understand your needs better and also confirms to us that you do indeed wish to be assessed by a Psychologist in addition to any help you may already be receiving.

HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO WAIT?

The aim is to send you an appointment as soon as possible, but as the service is in heavy demand, there is usually a waiting period before you are offered an appointment. The covering letter you received with this information sheet gives you an estimated waiting time.

PLEASE NOTE: *If your difficulties become more serious while waiting please contact either your GP or the Mental Health Professional who made this referral*

If you feel better and do not need an appointment we would be grateful if you could telephone 884 2453 and we will take your name off our waiting list.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.