

## Patient Information Leaflet



# Clinical Health Psychology for Heart Health

# How can having a heart condition affect people?

Having a heart attack or undergoing heart treatment can be a very frightening and shocking experience, and can bring other feelings such as resentment or loneliness. The process of recovery is made up of different stages both physically and emotionally and each person will experience this differently.

While some people can feel quite hopeful, for example feeling that they have been given a second chance, for other people adjusting to what has happened can be much harder, as they need to trust their bodies again.

**Some of the ways that having a heart condition can affect people psychologically are:**

*Feeling low  
or depressed*

*Feeling anxiety or  
panic in relation to  
cardiac symptoms  
or treatment*

*Feeling  
frustrated  
or angry*

*Experiencing  
trauma reaction  
to a medical event  
or procedure*

*Finding it  
difficult to cope  
with changes  
to work or  
social life*

*Finding  
relationships  
difficult*

*Fearing  
death*

*Feeling a  
sense of loss  
or grief*

*Finding it difficult  
to cope with  
uncertainty*

*Losing  
confidence*

*Finding it  
difficult to  
concentrate*



## What can I do about how I feel?

It is important to remember that it is natural to feel upset or distressed after an experience such as a heart attack or heart surgery.

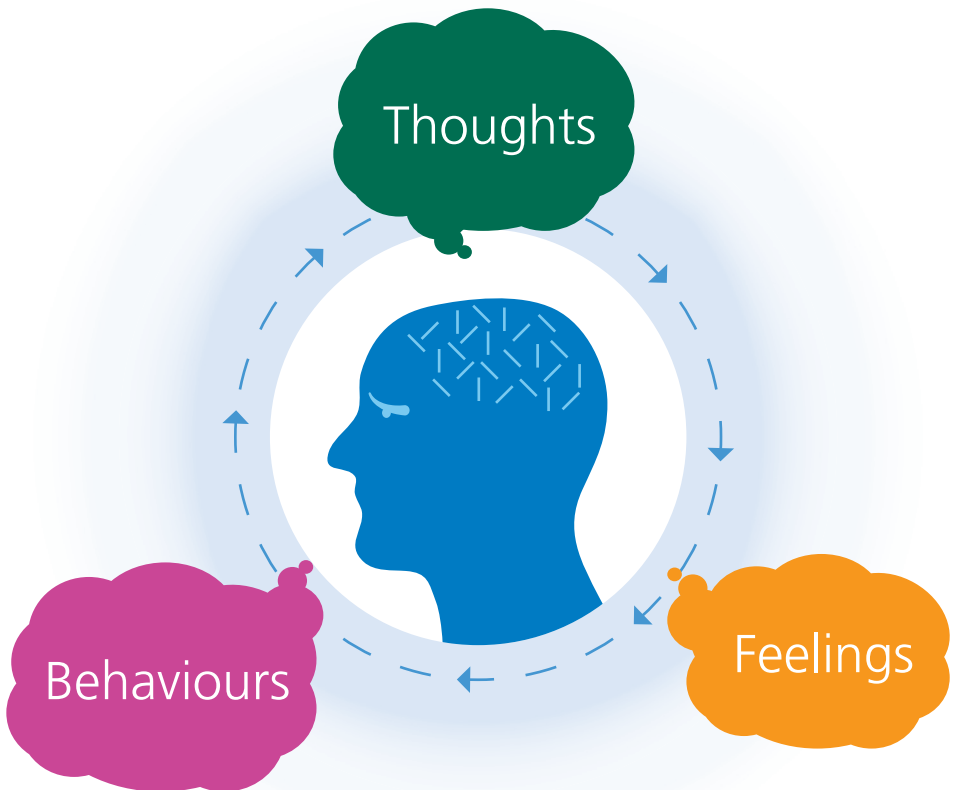
If you are concerned about how you are feeling, the most important thing you can do is to talk to someone you trust about the way you feel. This could be a relative, friend or a health professional. Everybody is different, and you may prefer to talk to someone other than those you are close to, in which case another option would be to meet with a psychological therapist.

Talking through feelings can not only help to relieve things but could also help people to find better ways to manage difficulties.

# How could a psychological therapist help?

Therapists in this service are trained to help people cope with the psychological and emotional effects of an illness. This is done through talking rather than prescribing medication

You will be offered the chance to talk about your concerns or feelings. Often having time to talk to a professional, outside the family, can help. This may help to make sense of what has been happening, such as understanding vicious cycles that involve our health, feelings and thoughts



## Who is the service for?

All adult patients at any stage of heart disease and under the care of Bradford Teaching Hospitals Trust can be referred to this service.

Your doctor or cardiac nurse might discuss a referral to a psychological therapist with you if they think that it might help you, or you could request a referral if it sounds that it might be helpful

## What will happen then?

You will be sent some information about the service, and an invitation to opt into it if it is something that you would like to do.

You can do this by post or phone. You will be offered an appointment when one is available.

Your therapist will arrange an appointment with you. Appointments usually last for 50 minutes.

At the first appointment you will spend time finding out what problems are important to you. You will both then decide whether seeing the therapist will be helpful for you. You would see the same person each time.



## How long would I need to see the psychological therapist for?

People vary in the number of sessions that they have with a psychological therapist. Some people see a therapist once or twice; others may see them once a week or once a fortnight for several weeks or months. This will be discussed with you in your first appointment.

However, even when you begin to work with the psychological therapist, you can decide to stop at any time. This will not have an effect on your medical care or treatment.

## Where will I be seen?

Outpatient appointments are usually held in the Horton Wing at St Luke's Hospital, Bradford. We also offer appointments over the telephone or by video.

# What about confidentiality?

Confidentiality is an important part of working with us in Clinical Health Psychology. This will be discussed with you when you meet the therapist.

## What if I have more questions?

If you would like any further information about Clinical Health Psychology Services please contact the department between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm at:



Clinical Health Psychology  
St Luke's Hospital  
Little Horton Lane  
Bradford BD5 0NA  
Tel: 01274 365176



<https://www.bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk/psychology>

You can contact us using the Relay UK app. Textphone users will need to dial 18001 01274 365176

### **British Heart Foundation**

More information can be found at: <https://www.bhf.org.uk>

### **Smoking**

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or use e-cigarettes in any of the hospital buildings or grounds.

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff.

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**Review date:** March 2025

**MID Ref:** 23022111